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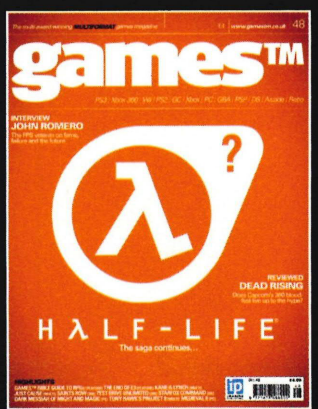

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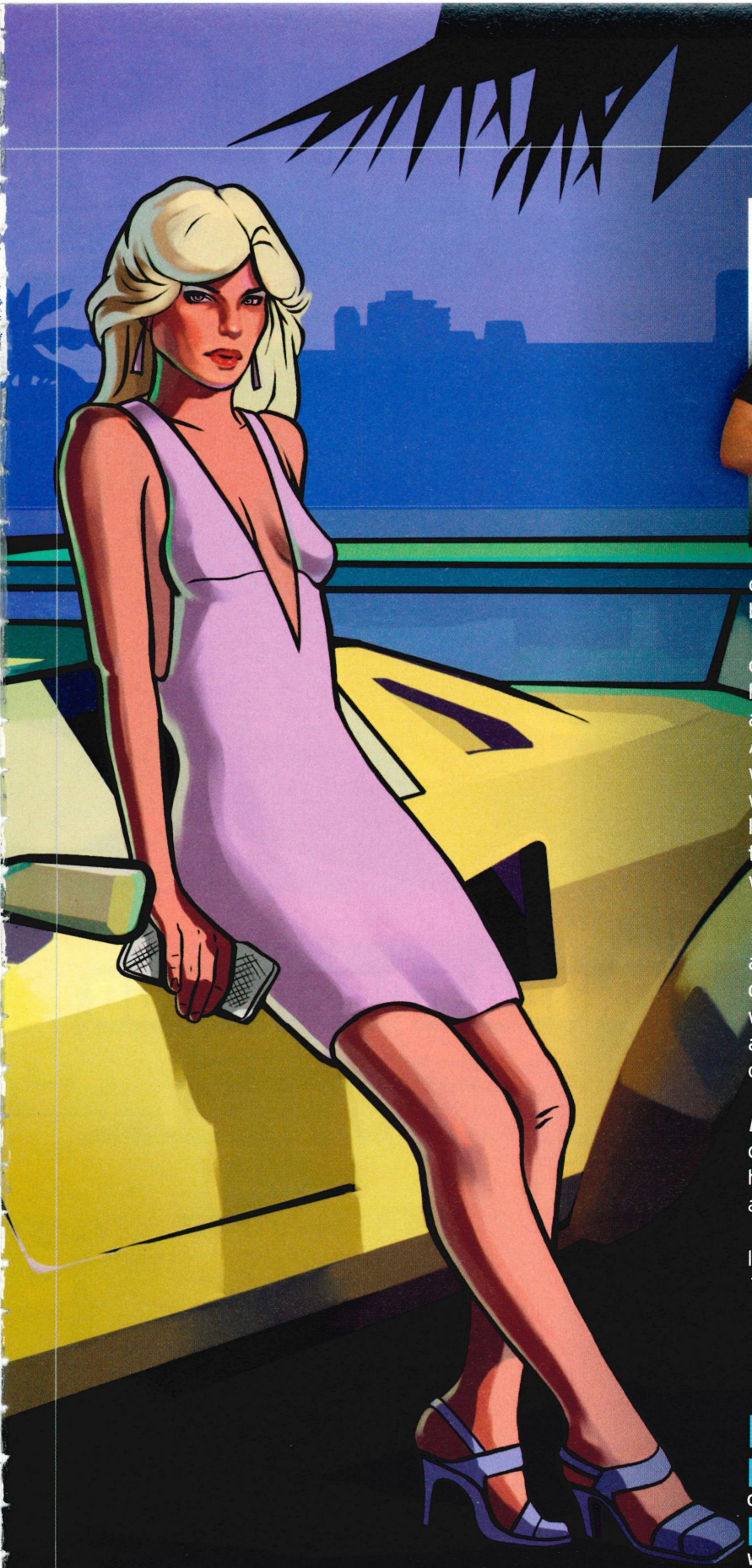

THIS IS IT. The one you've all been waiting for. And because we know you love it we have an exclusive hands-on with the latest *Grand Theft Auto*. And there are a few surprises. We won't ruin it, you should just turn to page eight and see for yourself. Let's just say that we can reveal a brand new, never-before-seen mode bringing yet another facet to the *GTA* universe.

It's hard to believe, but PSP wasn't only put on this Earth for *Grand Theft Auto*, and we also have a wealth of reviews, previews and news of all the games heading to your favourite portable. A playable version of *Killzone* finally arrived, and we spent as much time as we could examining whether it's everything we hoped for. We spent a lovely day in Oxford chatting to Razorworks about the PSP edition of *Ford Street Racing*. Oh, and we went go karting too. It's a tough life.

Ridge Racer 2, *The Godfather* and *Lego Star Wars II* all get the review treatment this month and the verdict for one of them might not be quite as you'd expect. Along with the big three, we also rate another 11 PSP releases, making a welcome change from the dry spell that all consoles have suffered over the summer months.

Anyone who picked up copies of *Gangs Of London* or *Micro Machines* should take a look at our guides for both, and homebrew fanatics will have their appetites sated for another month with a look at the Master Sytem emulator.

To round off the package, we have a feature looking at the pros and cons of trying to use *Talkman* while on holiday. Très bon!

See you next month for another exclusive!

Simon Griffin, Deputy Editor

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Our big exclusive reveals some exciting new developments!

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We played it for hours just to make sure it is actually great!

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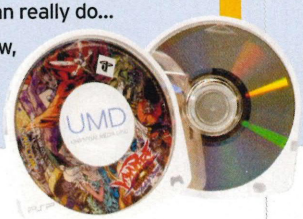

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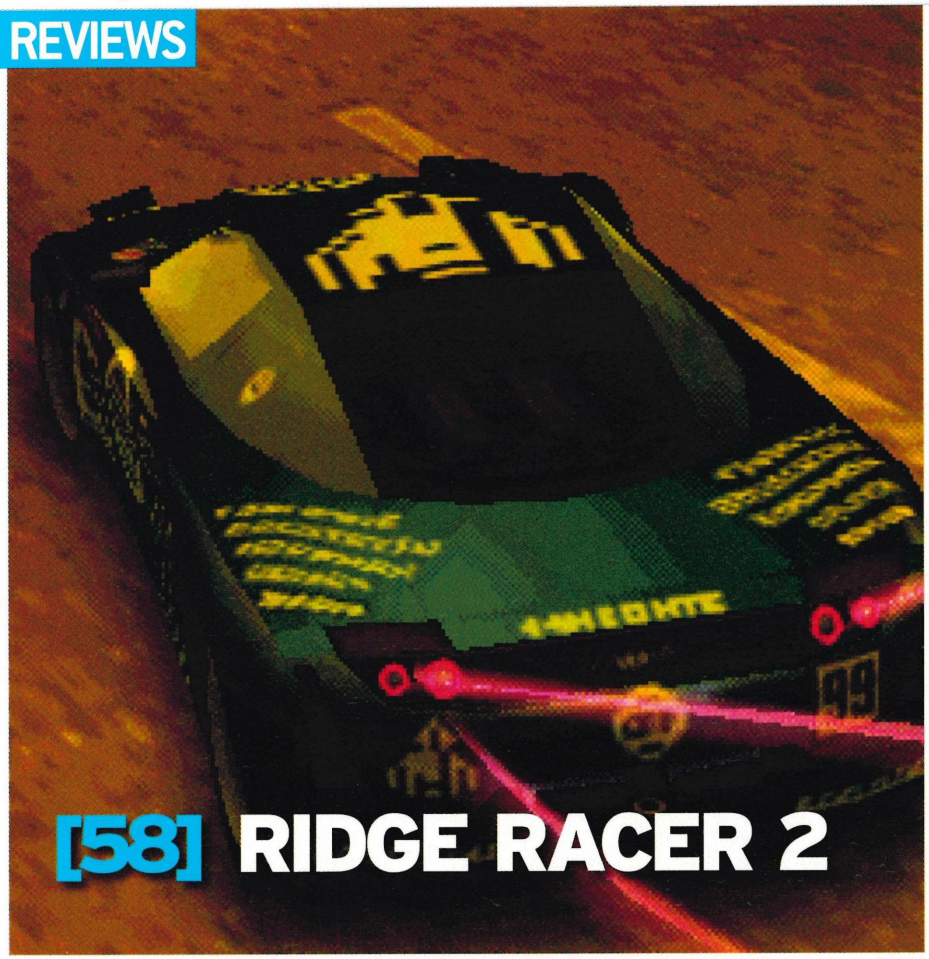

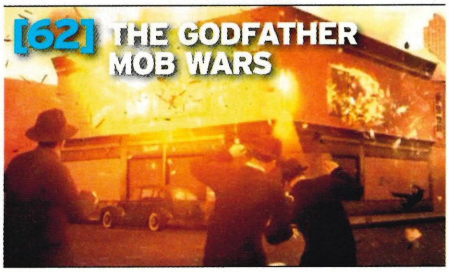

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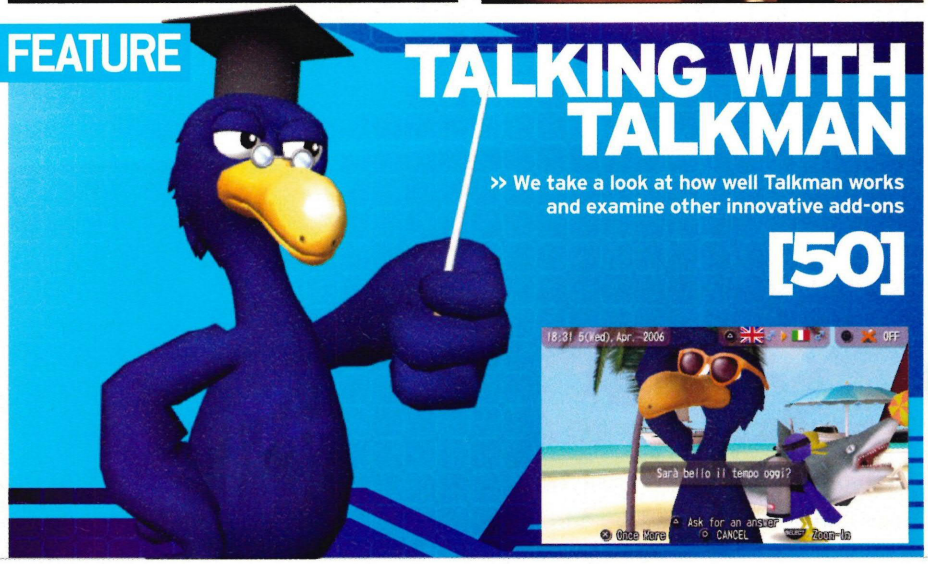

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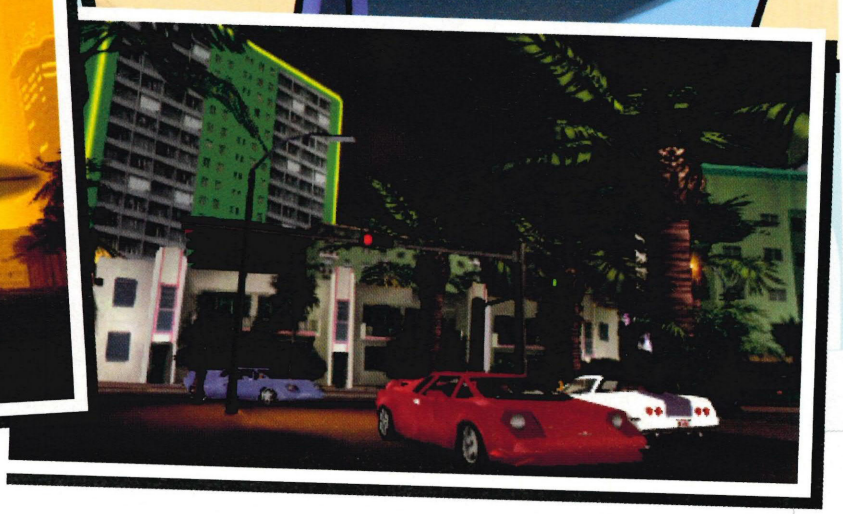
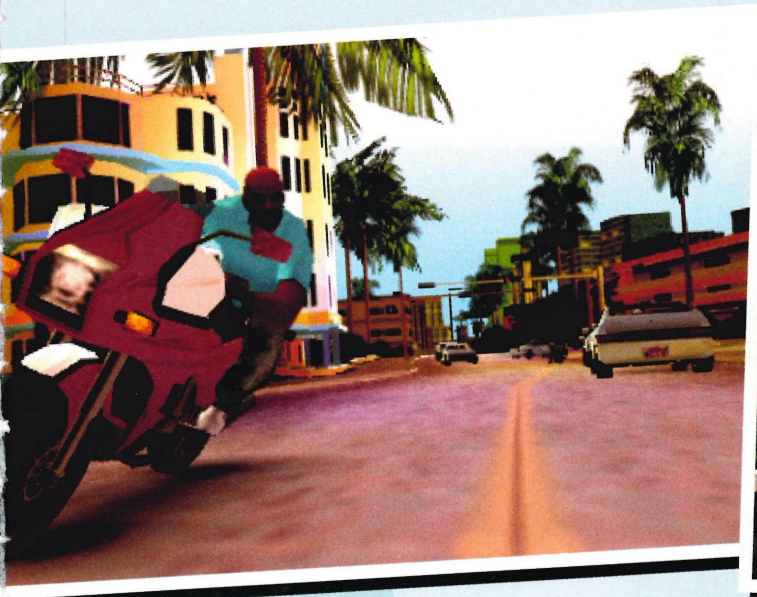
COMING SOON

grand theft auto

Vice City Stories™

WE SAT DOWN AND PLAYED THE GAME THAT EVERYONE IS WAITING FOR, UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYE OF ROCKSTAR, OF COURSE. FORGET WHAT YOU'RE EXPECTING; THIS GAME HAS SO MUCH MORE TO OFFER...



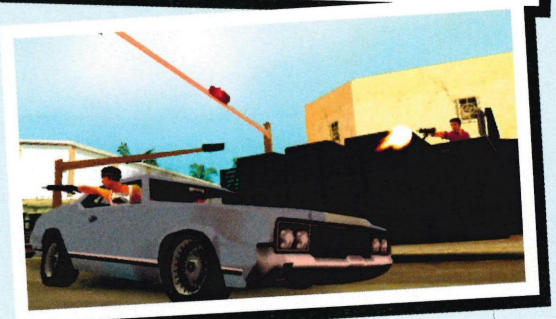


Grand Theft Auto: you either love it or hate it. The fact that *Liberty City Stories* has stayed in the top ten pretty much since its release almost a year ago tells us that most of you are quite partial to it. With that in mind, we paid Rockstar a visit on your behalf for an exclusive in-depth hands on of *Vice City Stories*, and boy if you liked *Liberty City* are you're going to adore this.

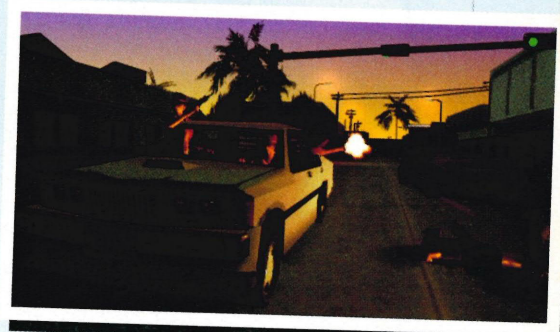
As we reported last issue, the main character is Vic Vance, brother of Lance Vance. Fortunately for Lance, *Vice City Stories* is set in 1984, two years before his death at the hands of Tommy Vercetti in the original *Vice City*. It seems Vic has been kicked out of the army (if one of the cut-scenes is anything to go by) and is looking to make some cash in *Vice City*. It doesn't take Lance long to get Vic mixed up in all sorts or shady dealings that set up many of the action-packed missions. The first we played saw Vic and Lance meeting up outside the airport. After a few wisecracks, some Cholos (one of the new gangs) drive up and express their displeasure with Lance. The pair jump into their car and Lance takes the wheel while you fire from the window in an on-rails section. Control was pleasingly simple and responsive with the effortless pleasure of blasting Cholos as they whizz by, bringing a big smile to our faces. After an intense chase through the city streets, Lance hits a huge jump and wrecks the car. The Cholos close in, and Vic now has to defend his brother and make a getaway. Suffice to say the cops are close on your tail, and the first thing you'll notice is how much more aggressive they are. Maybe Rockstar had sneakily put the difficulty up but as far as we're aware they didn't. The gangs are much tougher too and you'll need to really fight to come out of it alive, which should definitely make the game more challenging.

[The cops are close on your tail, and the first thing you'll notice is how aggressive they are]

Another mission that we were given the pleasure of trying out was Vic's first meeting with new character Gonzalez. This crime boss judges people on their golf skills, so unsurprisingly this first encounter takes place on the Leaf Links Golf Club. Gonzalez has tied a disloyal member of his crew to one of the buoys in the water in front of the driving range. The buoy is rigged with explosives so when it's hit the traitor will be killed. For this mission we had to take it in turns with Gonzalez to hit golf balls at the poor guy until one of us hit the target. Tiger Woods ›

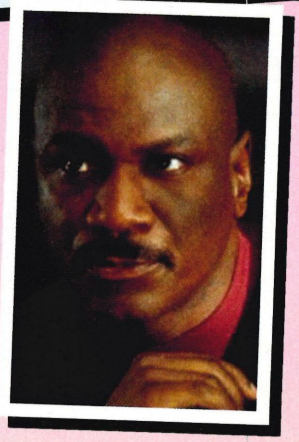


As usual, each gang has their own car type, so you know who you're killing

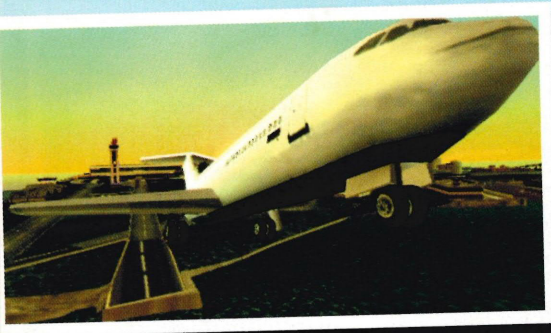


Ving plays Vic in Vice

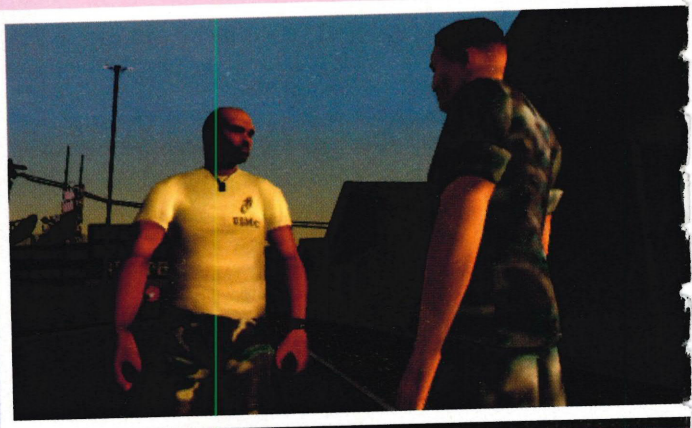
Big-name actor lends his talents to GTA



Although Rockstar wouldn't be drawn on who is providing the voice for Vic Vance, a quick look on imdb.com revealed that Ving Rhames is listed in the cast. Whether this is a mistake on the part of IMDb we can't be sure, but the site doesn't often get stuff like that wrong so it's probably true. Those of you not familiar with Ving's work can catch him in *Pulp Fiction*, all three *Mission: Impossible* movies, the *Dawn Of The Dead* remake and *Con Air* to name but a few.



Although it would be nice, we don't think it will be possible to fly passenger jets



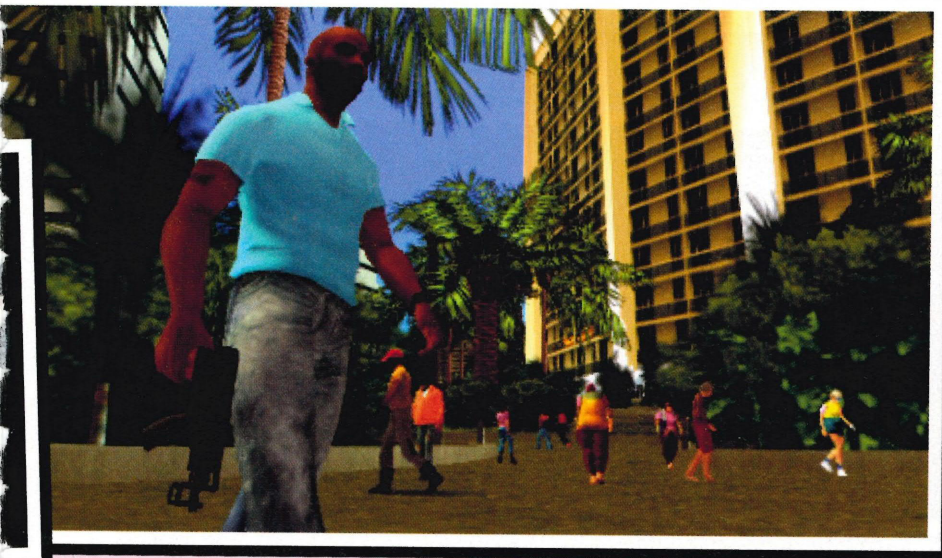
this ain't and all you can control is spin and power, but it's still a great little mini-game that remains unlocked once that mission is complete.

Mini-games aside, one of the aspects that has excited plenty of you is the inclusion of aircraft in *Vice City Stories*. We had the privilege of taking a flight in a helicopter, and we're pleased to report that it's just as easy to control as you remember. The draw distance on the ground below understandably drops considerably but not enough to really make a difference, and the load times between islands are still amazingly short even when in the air.

Exhilaration at flying aside, by far the most exciting thing we were show during our visit was a fantastic new mode called Empire Building. When it was mentioned at the start of the demo it sounded interesting, but our initial thought was that it would be some sort of strategy, map-based mode like that found in *Gangs Of London* or *The Godfather Mob Wars*. While those modes are fun, they don't provide much in the way of action, which is what *GTA* is all about. And so it was with a distinct lack of excitement that we waited for Empire Building mode to be shown.

So how silly did we feel when it was revealed to be totally contained within the normal 3D world of *GTA*?

The army are still present and will come out in force if you get a six-star wanted rating



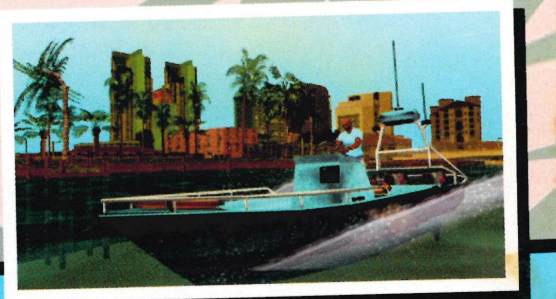
Very. You see, the basic premise of Empire Building sees you attacking properties owned by other gangs, and destroying the business that is operated within them. This attack is initiated by destroying the gang car that will be parked outside said building. Once you've done that, gang members will attempt to fend off your attack, so when you've dealt with them you need to head inside. Once on the interior of the building, you must kill any remaining enemies then set about wrecking the place so that the business can't operate any more. After that is successfully done, the building will then be for sale. Buy the building and you can start up your own business. You don't have to make it the same as it was before, and you can pick one of the six criminal endeavours on offer from prostitution, loan sharking, protection rackets, drugs, smuggling and robbery.

Not only can you select the type of business to operate but you can also choose what size it will be from small, medium or high roller. The size comes at a price so you'll need to start off modest with a small business that costs $2,000 and then move on to the medium which costs $3,900 and the high roller which will set you back $5,800.

Once you've made your choice of business, construction will begin on the site. This isn't some sort of instant transformation, and a hoarding will actually go up around the site while the building is renovated. Construction takes around two in-game days to complete and once it is you can pay it a visit and take a look inside. In your new building, you will see a certain number of gang members working away along with a notice board that allows you to make changes to the business, and a save point. The business will then begin to generate money, but to make the serious cash you'll need to embark on the missions that are provided inside the building. This will obviously vary depending on what type of business you have set up. For example, we set up a brothel and the mission we tried saw us ferrying girls ›

[Empire Building mode sees you attacking properties owned by other gangs]

The streets are lined with all sorts of luxurious cars just waiting to be nicked



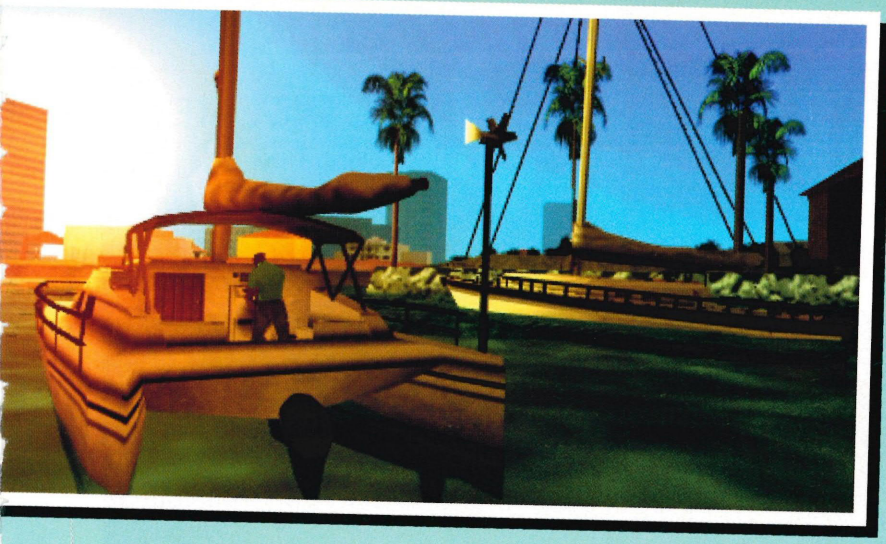
We don't remember this building so it could very well be a new landmark

to and from clients around the city – within a time limit of course.

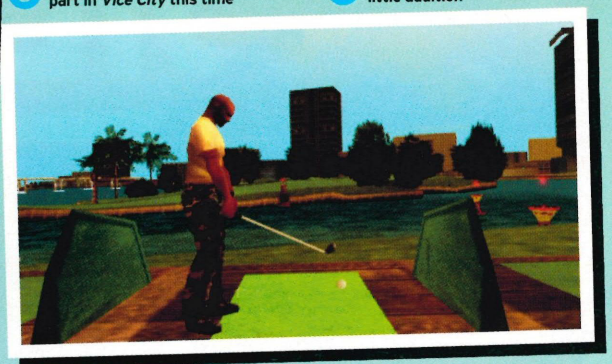
To facilitate this transport, we used the car that spawned outside the building, which seems to change depending on the business type and for a brothel was an awesome new pimped-out car with an engine that made a fantastic growling sound. Of course, these cars signify that the business is yours and will become targets for other gangs looking to muscle in on your action. That's right, not only can you attack rivals but they can also mount an assault on you. Whether your gang is capable of fending off attacks on its own if you're too far away wasn't revealed, but we expect it depends on how large the attack is. Mounting an assault on a large business on your own is not advisable, and this is where your gang comes in very handy. We weren't shown this in action, but we presume that you simply recruit gang members in the same way that you could in *San Andreas*, and then lead them to the business you want to attack. Location is all-important, and if you set up the same business type as a rival gang right across the street then you can expect them to try and put a stop to it. Another factor that determines what business you can run is the limit that has been imposed on the number of same business types that can be open at one time. Only five of each type can be run at once throughout the city so if there's a particular criminal activity that you wish to embark on then you'll need to close down a rival first before you can start up. That pretty much covers it really, and we can definitely say that after our initial trepidation, the Empire Building is a fantastic new addition to the franchise, and something that we'd definitely like to see more of in future *Grand Theft Auto* games.

> We came away **humming** plenty of recognisable and classic **Eighties tunes**

Elsewhere, Rockstar once again wouldn't be drawn on the track listing and we were told to take



Water plays an even bigger part in *Vice City* this time

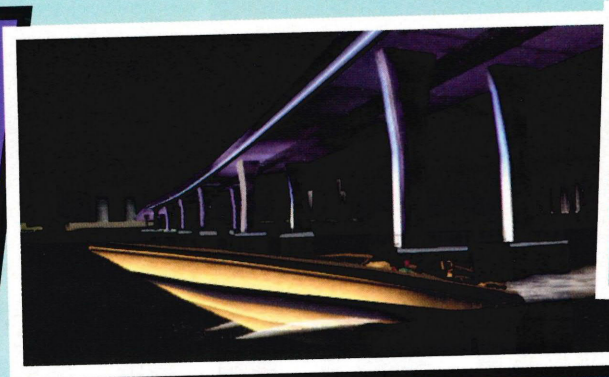


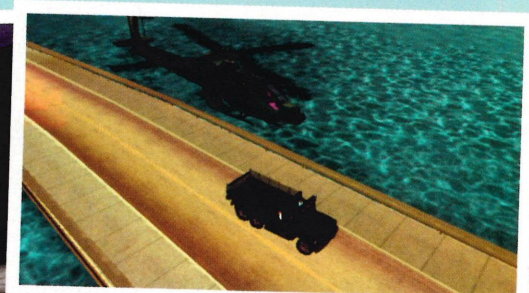
The golf mini-game is a great little addition

no notice of the music playing, as none of it was final. However, when the DJs are announcing the songs and it's all cut together perfectly, it's unlikely that much will change. We just wish our knowledge of Eighties music was slightly better, then we'd have jotted down some song titles. As it is we came away humming plenty of recognisable and classic Eighties tunes, the names of which were just a little too elusive after all these years. But trust us when we say the soundtrack is just as good as it was in *Vice City*, which for many was the best thing about it.

As for the rest of the game, there are still plenty of rumours surrounding it even at this late stage, and of course Rockstar will no doubt keep tight-lipped about them until the very last minute. Some of these are undoubtedly made up by hopeful fanboys, while others do seem to have an air of credibility about them. One of these rumours suggests that we will see the area where Vic and Lance grew up, which is purported to be a trailer park. This could very well suggest that a new area of Vice City has been added, albeit not a particularly big one. This certainly isn't out of the question and *Liberty City Stories* features a couple of extra areas such as the opened-up tunnel at the top of Shoreside Vale. Another questionable rumour hints that new weather effects are to be introduced including hurricanes. Of course, Florida is no stranger to hurricanes so that would make sense, but whether the game could really bring that sort of weather across is questionable. Can we expect cars to be hurled through the air and waves to throw boats up onto the land? We don't think so. The rain often got pretty fierce in the original *Vice City*, but it only really made a difference if you were out on a boat, and even then it wasn't much of a problem. We'll file that one under 'maybe but probably not'. Although, *Grand Theft Auto* games do have a tendency to surprise us in the most unexpected of ways so who knows?

As you can probably tell, we're pretty excited by this next instalment in the series. We went in thinking it would just be *Vice City* with a few new touches, perhaps borrowed from *San Andreas*. What we found, however, is that yet again Rockstar has managed to add elements to a *GTA* game that have not been seen in previous episodes. And that was just from a couple of hours with the game – imagine what else is in store for us. ■





INSIDER

ALL THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF PSP GAMING

PSP GOES TO WAR

CANNON FODDER REPORTS FOR DUTY

Codemasters revive classic franchise for PSP

Apart from an appearance as a mobile phone game last year, the last time we saw *Cannon Fodder* on a games console was on the Game Boy Color back in 2000. The classic shoot-'em-up from Sensible Software was a huge hit on the Amiga over a decade ago and saw you in control of a four-man squad facing all manner of craft enemies in a number of different terrains. The simple controls that required you to point and click where you wanted your men to go, ensured the game appealed to a wide audience. As the theme tune said: "War has never been so much fun."

Now we can all experience the addictive gameplay, as Codemasters get ready an updated version for the PSP. With new graphics that draw you closer into the action, *Cannon Fodder* will still retain the fast-paced strategic action that the series is known for along with its signature sense of humour. Alongside all the classic elements like the ability to control your troops individually or as a team, this update will also include a host of new features including the option to call in air strikes and perform radar sweeps. New weapons such as flamethrowers and sniper rifles will also join the roster. Not only that but the game will be Wi-Fi enabled allowing for four-player deathmatches and co-op.

Cannon Fodder is slated for release in the spring of 2007 so stay tuned for more intel. ■

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UBISOFT GIVES THE PSP A NEW HOPE

Star Wars strikes back

Could the Force be strong with this one?

So far the only *Star Wars* action we've seen on PSP has been the fantastic *Battlefront II*. While that's a cracking game it is available on pretty much every system known to man, making the PSP version a little less special. However, Ubisoft is set to rectify the lack of *Star Wars* action on PSP by releasing *Star Wars: Lethal Alliance* in December.

Set between *Episode III - Revenge Of The Sith* and *Episode VI - A New Hope*, it sees you controlling slinky Twi'lek Rianna Saren and her security droid Zeeo. Hired by the Rebel Alliance, the duo must engage in lots of collaborative gameplay as they visit Imperial planets and fight off Stormtroopers and legions of other bad guys as they endeavour to uncover the Empire's terrible secret weapon - the Death Star!

The collaborative fighting between the two lead characters gives this shoot-'em-up a different twist and you will only be able to get past some sections by using the skills of both characters together. On their travels Rianna and Zeeo visit such locales as Coruscant, Alderaan, the Mos Eisley Spaceport and even the technological terror that is the Death Star, where they will be able to use all manner of weapons from simple blasters to gun turrets and holographic disguises. Along the way they will encounter a number of familiar characters including Boba Fett, Darth Vader, Princess Leia and Kyle Katarn.

Hopefully we'll be able to bring you a full preview soon if our Bothan spies can dig up some more info. ■

Lethal Alliance is also coming to DS, but it won't look as nice as this, so who cares?

NO PRICE DROP FOR PSP

Sony stands firm on pricing policy

Rumours were abound recently that the PSP would see a drop in price some time before Christmas. The news came as little surprise to most, as the performance of the console, while good, pales in comparison to the Nintendo DS, which seems to be running away with the handheld market. Not only does the DS have a considerably larger number of games available, it is also at a far more affordable price point, which obviously appeals to parents looking to pick up a handheld for their kids. The price drop would have seen a $50 cut to bring the cost of a PSP down to $149.99 in the US, which is approximately £80-90 at a favourable exchange rate. Obviously the UK wouldn't see such a dramatic drop in price and the PSP would likely remain at over £100.

However, after all this speculation and a sense of inevitability hanging over the whole affair, Sony came out and stated that the price of the PSP will remain the same for the foreseeable future. Of course the PS2 has now dropped in price by £10 so at least Sony is still not averse to staying competitive. However, how much longer Sony will let Nintendo rule the handheld market with such conviction is unknown but it's possible that it is simply waiting to see how many PS3 owners pick up the handheld too over the Christmas period, when the much vaunted crosstalking options are finally revealed.

Perhaps in an attempt to soften the blow of no price drop, Sony has just released a new PSP package in the US, dubbed the 'Entertainment Pack'. In the box, along with the PSP and the usual gubbins, you get a 1GB Memory Stick, plus copies of *ATV Offroad Fury: Blazin' Trails* and *Lords Of Dogtown*, all for $249.99. Not exactly a must-have bundle though is it? ■

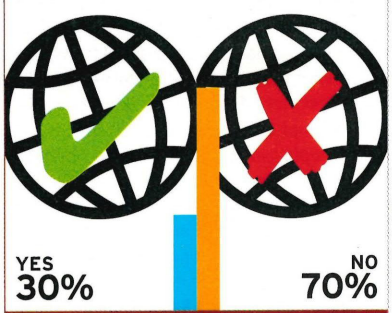
STATISTICALLY SPEAKING

Every month we'll be posting polls on our forum for you to vote in (play-mag.co.uk/forum Internet fans!)

WILL YOU PRE-ORDER A PS3?

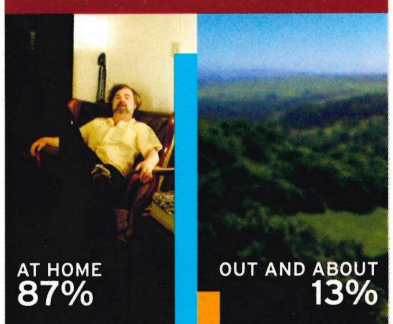
The majority seem unsure about Sony's new console at the moment.

DO YOU SURF THE NET WITH YOUR PSP?



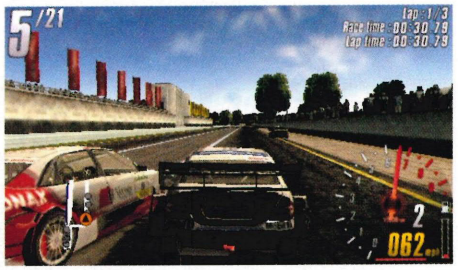
The web is a no-go area for a large number of PSP owners.

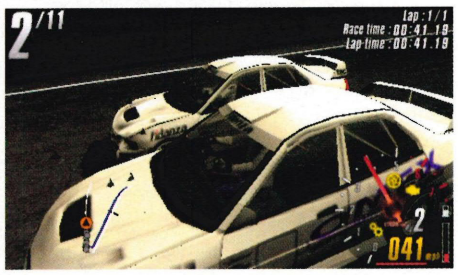
WHERE DO YOU MOSTLY PLAY?



Risk of theft, damage or loss put gamers off taking their PSPs outside.

RACE DAY



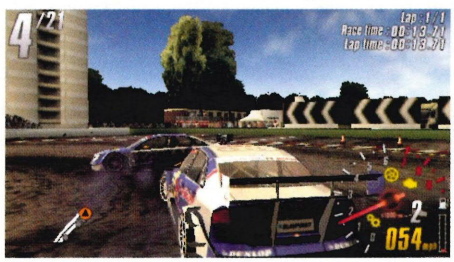


A NEW CHALLENGE FROM TOCA

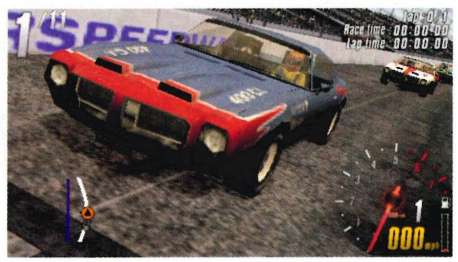
Codemasters readies next instalment of popular series

The *TOCA* series is renowned for not only its realistic racing but also the sheer volume of event types. There once was a time when touring cars were the main focus of the game, but the last few editions have seen the number of vehicles included increase exponentially. Rather than being a straight port of the console versions, *TOCA Race Driver 3 Challenge* has been designed from the ground up with the PSP in mind. Rather than having an abundance of long races like the previous title, the emphasis this time is on short bursts of gameplay, ideally suited to the world of handheld gaming. The main part of the game is the World Challenge mode which sees you competing through a series of international championship tiers that include skills tests, specialised events and championships encompassing many different racing styles. In addition to the in-depth World Challenge mode the game will also include Free Race and Time Trial plus Wi-Fi multi-player racing for up to 12 players. That's right 12! Not only that but you can hold a game share race for up to four players with just one UMD.

In keeping with the *TOCA* style, the cars all have realistic damage models that see sparks flying, windows smashing and bodywork deforming. *TOCA Race Driver 2* scored an impressive 81% in the very first issue so this edition has a lot to live up to. Exclusive to PAL territories, *TOCA Race Driver 3 Challenge* shows that we don't need the much-delayed *Gran Turismo* just yet. Expect it to race into shops this winter. ■



Race Driver 3* is looking really nice, but then so did *TOCA Race Driver 2



There are plenty of different cars on offer so you should find something that appeals

THE HOURS

WHAT'S BEEN EATING OUR LIVES, AND FOR HOW LONG

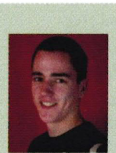
SIMON

KILLZONE: LIBERATION

"What an absolutely cracking game! I was so disappointed when the preview UMD stopped halfway through the missions. Jipped!" 08 hrs

BEING ILL

"Some bloody sod gave me a cold and when I get my hands on them I'll sneeze all over their faces and demand they never come near me again!" 07 Days



ANDY

NEW ZEALAND STORY – TAITO LEGENDS

"Ahh, there's nothing quite like a bit of classic retro gaming to warm the cockles. Throwing a little Kiwi around bizarre levels really is awesome." 01 hrs

SKIVING

"Took a week off and it rained every day. Of course, I come back to work and out comes the sun. British weather, eh?" 05 Days

TOM

FIELD COMMANDER

"I love taxing the old grey matter so this strategy game is right up my alley. Sending tanks, troops and choppers all over the place has never been this much fun." 03 hrs

CLEANING

"My scummy flatmates finally moved out so I spent much of my weekend clearing up the rancid mess they left behind." 08 hrs

HENRI

LEGO STAR WARS II

"*Star Wars* and Lego together again, only this time it's even better as it's based around three quality films instead of three rubbish one, huzzah!" 06 hrs

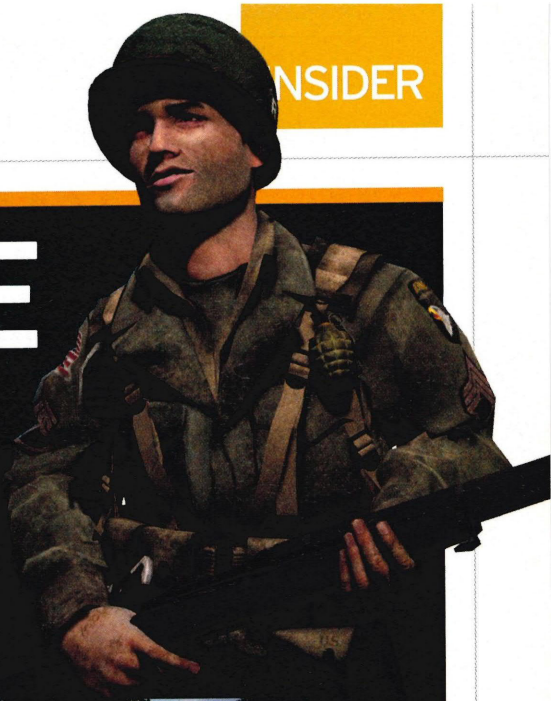
GOING TO FESTIVALS

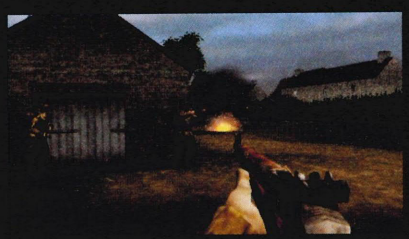
"I can't stop leaving my workmates in the lurch to swan off and dance like a loon in front of bands you've never heard of. Yay me!" 02 Days

BROTHERLY LOVE

Ubisoft brings WWII shooter to PSP

After rumours and release dates have been bandied about for months, Ubisoft has finally confirmed that *Brothers In Arms* is coming to PSP. Subtitled *D-Day*, this handheld edition will see you controlling the familiar characters of Hartsock and Baker through the entire Normandy campaign from the beaches to Carentan and St Sauveur. Much like *Hell's Highway* on PS3 there are new teams to issue orders to who have bazookas, MG42s and mortars at their disposal. In fact, much of what you'll find in the PS3 version will make it to the PSP including improved AI, new weapons and destroyable cover. The gameplay has been adapted for PSP so it is more suitable for handheld gaming with altered controls. Multi-player is also catered for with co-op Wi-Fi that has four different modes over 12 Skirmish missions. *Brothers In Arms: D-Day* is slated for an autumn release, so we should have some more info soon. ■





SEGA®

MAKE A NEW FRIEND

Partnership promises classic content

Sega recently announced its partnership with San Francisco-based Planet Moon Studios. The award-winning developer of *Giants: Citizen Kabuto* and *Armed & Dangerous* for PC and *Infected* for PSP is reported to be working on a classic, fan-favourite Sega brand that will be brought to the Sony handheld. Which franchise is getting a portable makeover is still veiled in secrecy, but that hasn't stopped us engaging in shameless speculation around the office. ■

Energy crisis

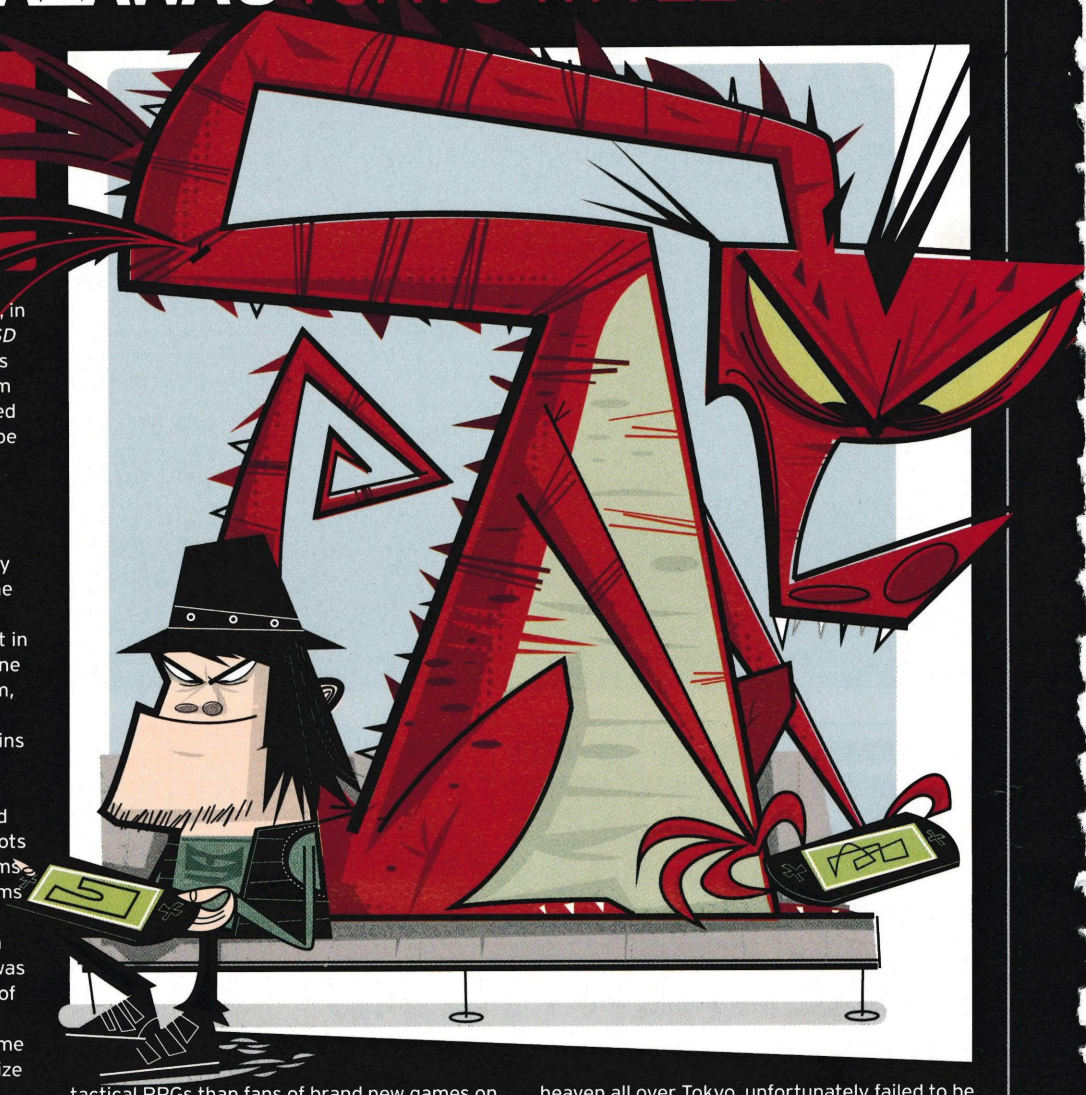
Waste not want not

A recent government energy review claims that videogame consoles are responsible for £70 million worth of wasted energy each year. The report highlights the fact that many consumer electronic devices sap a distressingly high amount of energy when in Standby mode. Amateur researchers in the US found that the original PlayStation leaked just 0.2W per year while both the Playstation 2 and Xbox 360 leak 2W in the equivalent period. The energy review proposes a number of changes to the way consoles use Standby modes, but by the time anything is implemented it will be too late to affect any consoles produced in the next few years. So next time you leave your console on Standby just remember all the energy you're wasting, that goes for your TV too! ■

TAKERU AMAZAWA'S TOKYO TITTLE TATTLE

ROBOT WARS

An insight into the world of Japanese PSP-ing by our man in Tokyo - Takeru Amazawa



The fastest-selling PSP game to date, in Japan anyway, is Bandai-Namco's *SD Gundam G Generation Portable*. This is a strategy game involving Gundam robots. Gundam robots are big robots, shaped like people, with people driving them. It can be said, then, that Gundam robots are cartoon projections of every primary schoolboy's dreams to be bigger.

Now, enter the 'SD' Gundam. 'SD' stands for 'Super Deformed', which means the body height is equal to two times the height of the head. The story goes that *SD Gundam* was born when a junior high-school student sent in a fan picture to the official *Gundam* magazine back in the Eighties. It was a "cute" Gundam, rife for merchandising, friendly - even for robot-loathing young girls to use as keychains or paperweights.

Eventually, there were funny little parody comics about the little robots. They all talked as though they were characters - not as robots being driven by humans. See, the SD Gundams have pupils in their eyes. The regular Gundams don't. These comics became popular, and eventually, there were videogames based on them: games like *Super Robot Wars*, which was kind of funny, though to a certain point kind of serious. You know, lots of jargon in the air.

Confusingly, the *SD Gundam* stories became nearly as serious and grandiose as the full-size *Gundam* stories. And eventually, the pupils vanished from the eyes of the *Super Robot Wars* Gundams, even though the Gundams were still of big-headed SD dimensions. At this point in time, 'SD' is an art style, and doesn't guarantee humorous content.

> LocoRoco, which was **advertised** to high heaven, failed to be a **very big hit**

At this ambiguous time, a remake of the ten-year-old PSOne turn-based strategy game, *SD Gundam G Generation*, arrives on the PSP, and blows away all sales records for the system's software. This means that:

1. There are a lot of fans of Gundam in general.
2. There are a lot of fans of SD Gundam G Generation.
3. There are a lot of fans of ten-year-old tactical RPGs.
4. There are a lot more fans of ten-year-old tactical RPGs than fans of brand new games on the same system.

You see, on the same day that *SD Gundam G Generation Portable* was released, *Goku Makaimura* (which I reckon will be called *Ultimate Ghosts 'N Goblins* over there) was released, marking a return for the series after a 15-year absence. The game is brilliantly difficult and difficultly brilliant, yet it came very low on the sales charts. It was advertised with a classy web ad spot in which a Japanese actor portraying the series hero Arthur tells an interviewer what he'd been doing for 15 years (you can see it at makai.jp - even if you don't understand Japanese, you'll probably get its meaning). Also puzzling, *LocoRoco*, the cutesy game Sony had expected to drive up sales with casual gamers, which was advertised to high heaven all over Tokyo, unfortunately failed to be a very big hit.

Instead, *SD Gundam G Generation Portable* became the PSP champion Game Of The Year. Other big hits include *Gundam Quiz Warriors*, a trivia game that tests your knowledge of the many iterations of the *Gundam* animated series. Hell, I don't get it.

For a long time people have been pointing out that Japanese PSP software seems to consist of either unpolished, broken quiz games or remakes of mild PSOne hits. Why don't they remake the big PSOne hits?

It's been confirmed that you'll soon be able to download and play PSOne games on your PSP. There are rumours gathering like fog that there's even a new PSP in the works, with a multi-gigabyte flash drive instead of a UMD or Memory Stick. Maybe it's time for them to face facts. And fix the square button?

And... according to Amazon.co.jp, the most pre-ordered PSP game at present is, er... a *Gundam* fighting game. ■

FIVE STAR

Each month, someone picks their five fave PSP games

Simon Griffin
Deputy Editor

TEKKEN: DARK RESURRECTION
This should be in every collection. You can't beat a bit of Bryan action.

GANGS OF LONDON
Okay, so this isn't without its flaws, but there's just so much to do it kept me occupied for hours.

GTA: LIBERTY CITY STORIES
After playing *Vice City* I thought I'd revisit this, and boy is it still a corker.

LOCOROCO
A game that held no appeal at first glance, but once I got to grips with it I could not put it down.

SYPHON FILTER: DARK MIRROR
The best shoot-'em-up on PSP yet. Brilliant level design, visuals and control.

GAME, SET, MATCH!

Sega serves up Virtua Tennis

Already announced for PS3 and Xbox 360, Sega has now revealed that *Virtua Tennis 3* is heading to PSP. Building on the fantastic *World Tour* that was released last year, this latest edition will once again allow you to create your own player to participate in World Tour mode, which will include ten new mini-games that will retain the addictive fun that *Virtua Tennis* is renowned for.

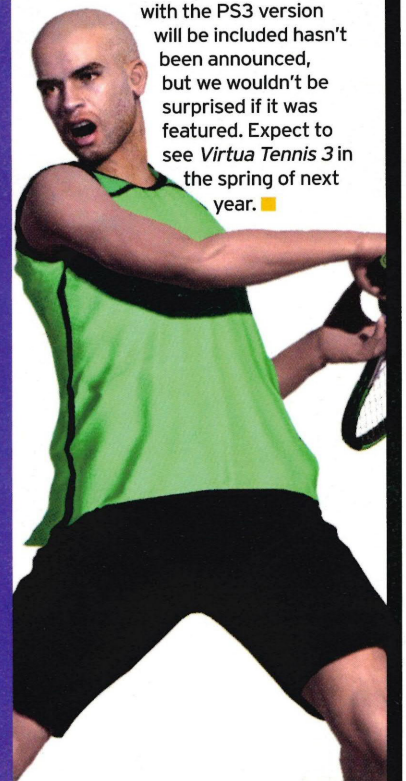
Another new mode called Court Games will allow these mini-games to be played by up to four players adding a new dimension to the multi-player experience. Five set matches will also be included so you can play a full game rather than the shortened arcade-style matches that the series has been known for. Whether any crosstalking with the PS3 version will be included hasn't been announced, but we wouldn't be surprised if it was featured. Expect to see *Virtua Tennis 3* in the spring of next year. ■

PLAYER ROSTER

All these tennis stars will have virtual versions in Virtua Tennis 3...

Male
Roger Federer
Rafael Nadal
Andy Roddick
Tim Henman
Lleyton Hewitt
James Blake
Mario Ancic
Gael Monfils
Taylor Dent
David Nalbandian
Sebastian Grosjean
Juan Carlos Ferrero
Tommy Haas

Female
Amelie Mauresmo
Maria Sharapova
Venus Williams
Martina Hingis
Nicole Vaidisova
Lindsay Davenport
Daniela Hantuchova



SEGA PROFESSIONAL TENNIS
Virtua Tennis 3 TM

london games festival 2006

Gaming comes to the big smoke

From 2-7 October London will be host to not just a games show but also a games festival. Both the public and the industry event will be held all week to showcase some of the hottest upcoming games, consoles, developers... well pretty much everything game related you can think of.

The festival will include appearances, previews and even opportunities to get hands-on with a number of forthcoming releases. All these events will take place at various locations around the city, which we've handily outlined below...

London Games Festival Fringe
2-7 October - a range of central London locations

Tournament Stage
2-7 October - HMV, Oxford Street

The Family Game Show
2-7 October - John Lewis, Oxford Street

The London Game Career Fair
3-4 October - Café Royal

Sense of Play - A Game Design Symposium
6 October - a central London location

Cinema Showdown
7 October - Vue Cinema, Leicester Square

Playing Films, Watching Games
7 October - BFI's National Film Theatre

For more information on all the events head on over to www.londongamesfestival.com ■

GET CONNECTED

PS3 ⟷ PSP

Details on exactly what will be possible if you have both a PS3 and PSP are still sketchy but that won't stop us engaging in some shameless speculation...

Chatting

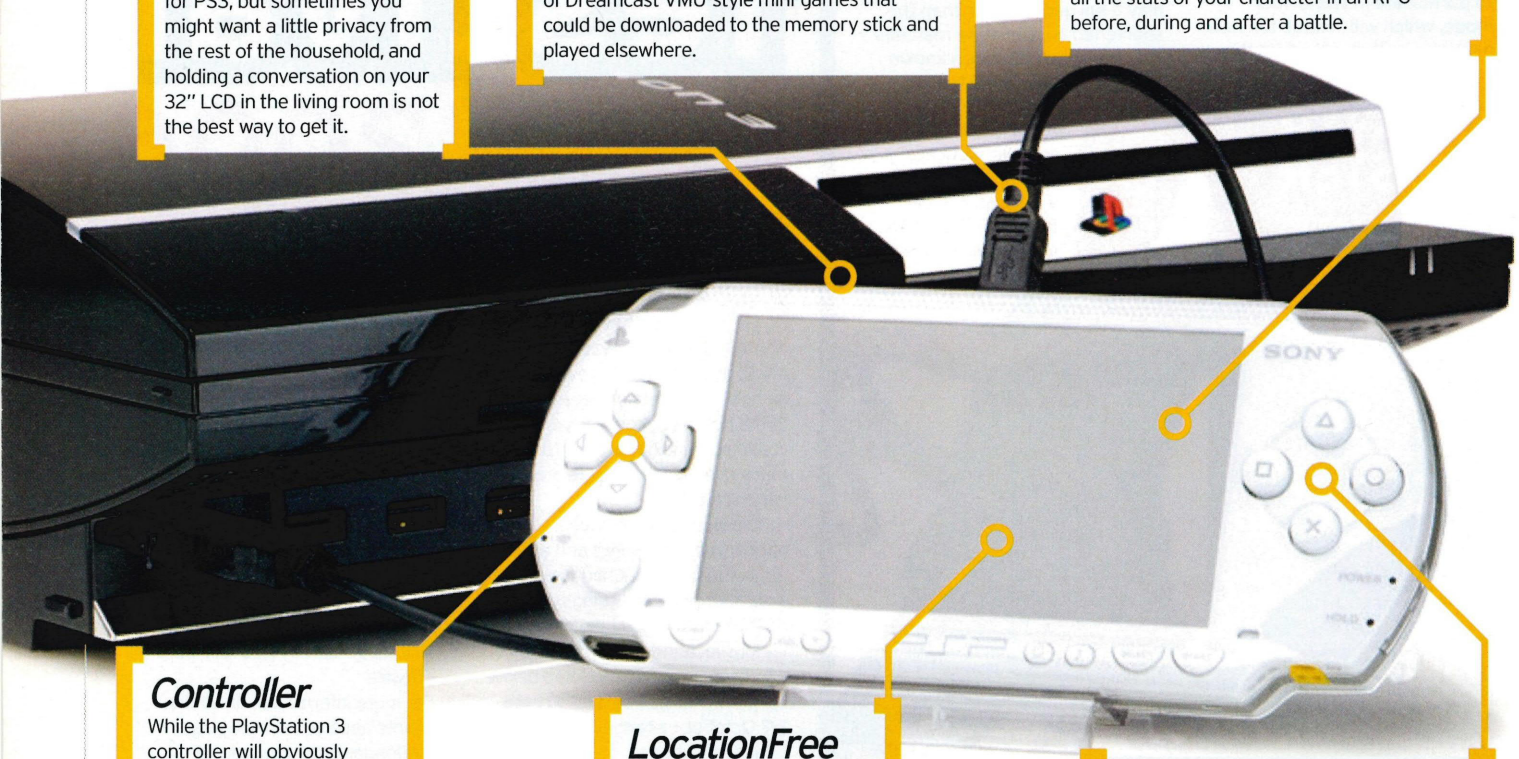
With the recent release of the PSP microphone and headset and the camera surely not too far behind, the PSP could be used as a videophone to speak to friends over the Internet. Obviously there will be a headset and camera available for PS3, but sometimes you might want a little privacy from the rest of the household, and holding a conversation on your 32" LCD in the living room is not the best way to get it.

Crosstalking

We all know this is already possible with PS2 and is likely to be ramped up on PS3 with as many games as possible taking advantage of the ability to transfer data to and from PS3 and PSP versions of the same game. Of course, the USB cable will almost certainly be used to transfer photos, movies and music to and from the consoles too. There's even the possibility of Dreamcast VMU-style mini-games that could be downloaded to the memory stick and played elsewhere.

Second Screen

The possibilities are almost endless for using the PSP screen in conjunction with a PS3 game. We've already seen it in action as a rear-view mirror for a racing game so there's no reason it couldn't be used as a map screen or something similar. Just imagine playing *GTA* and being able to glance at the map without having to pause the game or checking all the stats of your character in an RPG before, during and after a battle.



Controller

While the PlayStation 3 controller will obviously take precedence in most games, there's nothing to say that the PSP couldn't be used as a controller too. Obviously the main advantage of this would be the extra screen so there's plenty of scope for some innovative ideas that will put it to good use.

LocationFree

While this won't work in the same way as an actual LocationFree base unit, we're hoping Sony will enable PS3 to beam a signal to your PSP so you can watch a Blu-ray movie on it. Great if there are always arguments about what to watch on the TV or if you just fancy watching a movie while tucked up in bed.

Remote Control

If PS2 is anything to go by then PS3 won't come with a remote control for Blu-ray movie playback. No doubt one will be available separately, but hopefully Sony will also make it possible for PSPs to act in the same way as a remote so PSP owners won't have to shell out on another piece of kit. Both machines have infrared ports so there's no reason why this shouldn't be possible.

OUR MAN ON THE CLAPHAM OMNIBUS

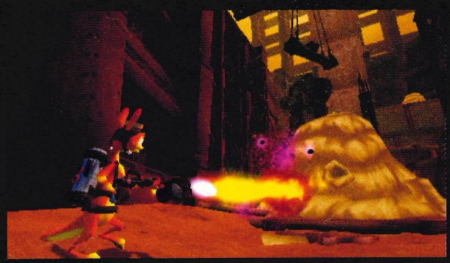
THE PACIFIER

Suck on this... it might calm you down a bit

After last month's release of pent up PSP fury, it occurred to me that maybe I need to calm down. Quite how I'm supposed to do this is beyond me, but as I tried various techniques - listening to calming music, reading the paper in the park on a Sunday, lighting the occasional incense stick and selecting a more sublime image for my desktop - a thought struck me. Maybe this anger is game related. Perhaps I take my life too seriously? Maybe I'm too intolerant of the people around me - after all, I only ever really speak to people over a game of Wi-Fi *FIFA* and that's not exactly the most peaceful of activities. How am I to calm down with the influence of rage-inducing games like *Mercury* and *Smart Bomb* as well as violent shooters like *Syphon Filter* and *SOCOM*. Perhaps those *Daily Mail* readers and Jack Thompson are right. Am I being influenced by my gaming habits? Could I wind up sitting at my window with a semi-automatic rifle, drooling into my lap and barking like a dog? I feel it's unlikely, but if something like that were to happen, you can be pretty sure that games will have something to do with it.

In an effort to ease my worried mind, I went on a bit of a mission to find some nice, relaxing PSP titles. Strolling into my local Game store - a stressful experience in itself - a quick perusal of the charts indicated that I'd have to look elsewhere for games with a pacifying influence.

Okay, so let's have a little look then shall we? What's up for grabs on the shelves of your local GAME then? Oh look it's *Ape Academy* - that got great reviews. What does the back of the box say? Oh... monkeys. Lots of monkeys - I hate monkeys. If it were 'Squirrel Academy', I might be a little more inclined to fork out a score on this, but as it is I can see myself getting horribly irritated at this one, so it's probably best to leave it well alone.



Aggressive extermination. Not renowned for its calming influence, even when it's sweet little Daxter.

Ah, here we go, *Carol Vorderman's Sudoku*; that sounds about as relaxed as you can get. How could you get irritated with that? Oh, hang on, I'm utterly woeful at Sudoku, and as much as I like the idea of letting Carol teach me a thing or two about numbers, I doubt if it would have the desired effect. And anyway, my lady would probably get more than a little jealous about the amount of time I spent with the lovely Miss Vorderman - I bet those thighs can crunch more than just numbers.

> Could I wind up **sitting at my window** with a **semi-automatic rifle**, drooling into my lap and **barking like a dog?**

What about kiddies' games, there must be a few out there designed to calm overly excited children, surely? You'd think so wouldn't you? Well, if you did you're wrong. *Crash Tag Team Racing*, *Daxter*, *Kao Challenges* and *Pac-Man World 3* all involve massive amounts of baddy bashing. How's that going to help me?

Sports? Nope, too competitive. Puzzling... well, if you're a regular reader, you'll know what that does to me. RPGs? I don't think so. And as for racing titles, that's only going to encourage me to take my internal fury out on other drivers. One way or the other it looks like I'm screwed. The mere thought of looking through all these titles does little more than give me a headache and cause my shoulders to bunch horribly. If any of you have any suggestions, please send them in as I'm just weeks away from trading in my PSP for a down-payment on a shotgun. ■

PS2 SPY

There's life in the old girl yet so we examine which games are worth a look on the ageing system...

Canis Canem Edit

Publisher: Rockstar
Release: October 2006

Seemingly canned after Rockstar mentioned nothing about it for months, it has now been revealed that *Bully*, as it was once known, is now on course for release and is now a PS2 exclusive. The game sees you taking the role of a troubled schoolboy who has an entire school and town to explore along with teachers to avoid, bullies to get revenge on and kids to play pranks on. Guaranteed to incite anger from Jack Thompson and the Daily Mail, we'll soon find out if the fuss will be worth it.

Buzz! Junior: Jungle Party

Publisher: SCEE
Release: October 2006

This is one for the kid in all of us, with a host of party games that will test your timing with a buzzer. Rather than answering questions like the previous *Buzz!* titles this sees you participating in all manner of jungle-based mini-games for up to four-players. Some of them look a little childish, but we've seen plenty of adults having great fun huddled around the TV attempting to get their monkey to fart without waking a gorilla. If you want something the whole family can enjoy on Christmas Day then this is the perfect purchase.

The *Buzz!* host isn't in *Jungle Party*, but we love him, so here he is!

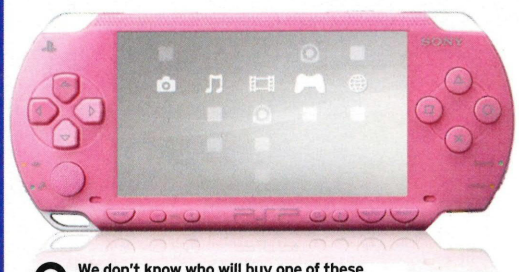
Trust pink

PlayStations get a fresh makeover

Sony has gone all girly on us and announced the forthcoming release of a limited edition pink PSP and PS2. The PSP will hit shelves on 27 October and will set you back £169.99. The pink pack will include the usual headphones, pouch, wrist strap, 32MB Memory Stick (possibly all pink), plus a UMD featuring music videos, live performances and interviews with singer Pink.

The pink PS2 will be released the week after on 1 November for £129.99 and will include two pink dual shock pads along with a pink memory card and a copy of *SingStar Pop* and presumably the microphones too.

SCEE claims these new pink packs are designed to broaden the appeal of the consoles and will hopefully attract customers who aren't yet ready for the next-generation of gaming. ■



We don't know who will buy one of these so if you want one, please tell us why

PSP – GAMES = MYLO

Sony releases another new gadget

What happens when you remove the UMD drive from the PSP and add a keyboard? You get the nifty new mylo (yes, the m is supposed to be lowercase, that makes it quirky and trendy you see). This new gadget from Sony allows wireless web surfing, MP3 and movie playback, photo storage and pretty much everything the PSP does except the games. It even has a couple of extra features such as GPS and the ability to text and call your mates. Even better is that it does all its phone business over the net, which makes it free! It's priced at $350 in the US so expect it to be around £200 if and when it's released in the UK. Should you trade in your PSP for a mylo? Well, if you want all the features of PSP, but you're not bothered about the games, then yes. Otherwise just keep your PSP and have a mobile too. ■

PS3 UPDATE

Launch plans still ongoing

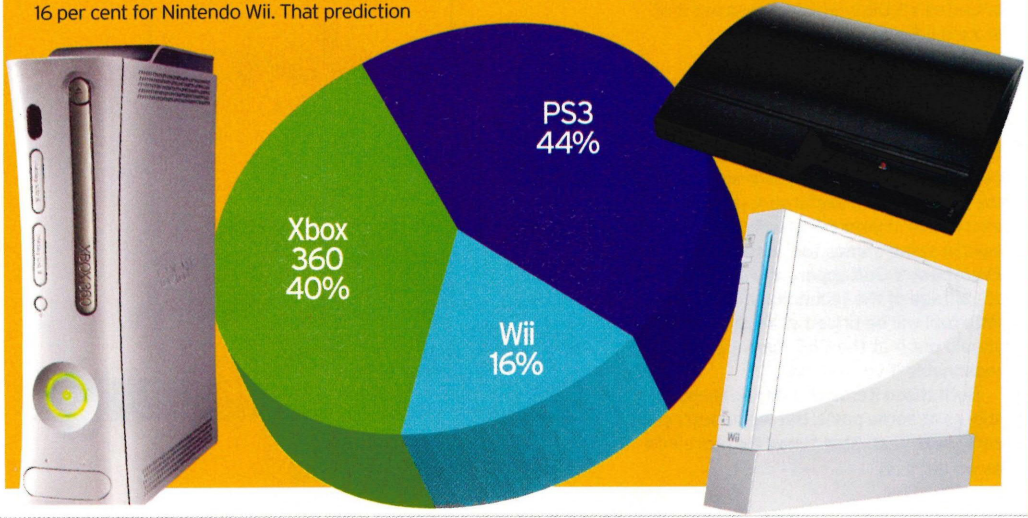
At the time of writing, Sony still hasn't finalised the launch strategy for PS3 just three months before the expected release date on 17 November. By the time you read this Sony should have finally announced the pre-order system which may well involve a controversial £150 deposit. Whether this outlay would guarantee you a machine on day one is still to be determined, but if the PS2 launch is anything to go by then probably not. This assumption has been further enforced by the fact that SCEA president Kaz Hirai came out and said that retail shortages are inevitable, admitting that production lines still haven't begun full operation. Hirai went on to say that a proportion of consumers would probably be disappointed when the release comes in November. Nothing is definite though and Sony still plans to have 2 million units ready for launch, so who knows what will happen come 17 November? ■

The future of PS3

Analysts look into their crystal balls

Market analysts are backing Sony to win the next-gen console war and are predicting a 44 per cent market share for PlayStation 3 in the US by 2011. Not only this, they also forecast sales of 30 million units for the console. Compare this to predictions for Xbox 360 with a 40 per cent share and a measly 16 per cent for Nintendo Wii. That prediction would probably be similar for the UK whereas the Japanese market would be completely different with the region's lack of interest in Microsoft's Xbox 360.

Of course, by 2011 most of us will be looking ahead to the next generation of consoles and by then PlayStation 4 will no doubt be in the videogaming pipeline. ■



PS3 SPY

With so many PS3 games in the pipeline, we take a look at which ones are worth keeping an eye on...

Army Of Two

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Release: TBA 2007

A purely co-op experience whether you play it with a friend or with the CPU, *Army Of Two* sees you in the shoes of two mercenaries who are part of a Private Military Contractor. Set in the near future, the pair go to various war torn areas to do the jobs that governments want no association with. Boasting revolutionary AI that sees your CPU partner remembering your previous actions and reacting accordingly, *Army Of Two* looks like it could bring something totally fresh to the genre.

Resistance: Fall Of Man

Publisher: SCEE
Release: November 2006

A proposed launch title, this first-person shooter sees the player placed into an alternate reality where World War II never happened. Instead, by 1952 much of the planet has been overrun by bizarre creatures known as Chimera. The Chimera are a virus and their human victims are then infected and join the ranks of the beasts. The final stronghold of Europe is good old Blighty and it's up to you as Nathan Hale to put a stop to the advance of these unsavoury invaders.

NEWSFLASH

Slippery slope

Skiing sim on the way

If you enjoyed the skiing sections in *SSX On Tour* then you might be pleased to hear that JoWooD is lining up the release of the Coldwood Interactive developed *Freak Out*. This free-ride skiing experience will give you plenty of stunts and tricks to perform as you hurtle down the mountain. The game is pencilled in for release at the beginning of next year.

Cheapies

PS2 falls in price

Those of you who might not have the funds to join the next-gen world of PlayStation 3 just yet may be pleased to hear that PS2 has had a price drop to £94.99 and the 8MB Memory Cards have also dropped to £19.99. If you still haven't got a PS2 yet, what the hell are you waiting for?

Continuing voyages

Star Trek for common people

Bethesda Softworks has announced that all former *Star Trek* captains will provide their voice talents for their forthcoming Xbox 360 game *Star Trek: Legacy*. Hopefully this means that we can expect the dulcet tones of William Shatner to grace the PSP release *Star Trek: Tactical Assault*. If you missed our preview last issue, the impending title sees you in the captain's chair of all manner of spacecraft from the original *Star Trek* series, in which flares and sideburns abound.

Gamers get clean

Addicts receive help

The first clinic for people addicted to gaming has been opened in Amsterdam. Set in a serene 16th Century townhouse the Smith & Jones clinic offers in-patient programmes for groups of 12 at a time that can last up to six weeks. Originally opened as a clinic for a variety of more common addictions, they've recently had an influx of patients hoping to be weaned from their hobby, one even admitted to playing for 18 hours straight. Many of them often put their lives on hold to play games and would consume anything from Red Bull to cocaine to keep them awake and able to play. Research into the effects of gaming have revealed that some games can trigger the release of the chemical dopamine into the brain at such increased levels that it is equivalent to taking a dose of speed.

Games are good for you!

Experts give verdict on gaming

Consumers, publishers and developers of videogames all met in Brussels on 6 July to discuss the medium in depth at a meeting hosted by the Interactive Software Federation of Europe (ISFE). A panel of independent experts including psychologists and media specialists presented to various participants including parents' representatives. They gave the gathered attendants their views on all aspects of videogaming including the impact on players, particularly those in the younger age bracket.

The majority of these expects, who hailed from various universities and research institutes, came out in favour of games, much to our surprise. The major positive aspect they reported on seeing in a number of games is the growing number of innovative aspects ranging from education and the treatment of behavioural problems. However, many agreed that while they didn't consider videogames to be an addictive pastime, more research is needed into the matter along with better information for parents regarding the content and nature of games. Thankfully Jack Thompson wasn't there to voice his rabid opinions and ruin everyone's day. Score one for games! ■

HAPPY SNAPPING

PSP ACCESSORIES REVEALED

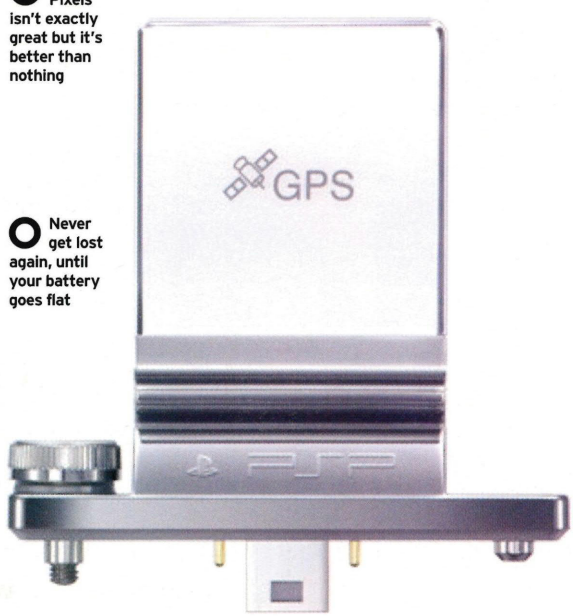
Sony shows off camera and GPS receiver

Since the release of the PSP, Sony has hinted at various add-ons it may bring out during its lifespan. We already have the *Talkman* microphone and the *SOCOM* headset, so get ready for the camera and GPS receiver, both due in Japan later this year and hopefully in the UK not long after. The camera will take pictures at a resolution of 1.3 million pixels and at either 480x272 or 640x480. The camera will also be able to record movies at 480x272 with sound captured by a mono microphone in the PCM format, but don't expect the quality to be particularly great. This does open up potential for EyeToy-style games on PSP although at the moment there is a significant delay, which would make it difficult to use in a game. The unit will be priced at ¥5,000, which should put it at around £25 over here.

The GPS receiver, which was mysteriously absent from this year's E3, will be released in Japan sometime in December around a month after the camera. While few details have been announced, we're assuming that the device will be useful as a sat nav alternative in your car. It will also have uses in some games too, with the next *Everybody's Golf* apparently set to take advantage of the technology. This handy little tool will be priced at ¥6,000, which should put it at the £30 mark – pretty reasonable if you ask us.

Both these items should see these shores at some point, but we're betting on early next year. Stay tuned for more info as we get it. ■

1.3 Mega Pixels isn't exactly great but it's better than nothing



Never get lost again, until your battery goes flat

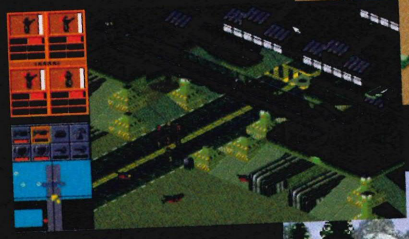
EA LOOKS TO THE PAST

Gaming giant readies retro collection

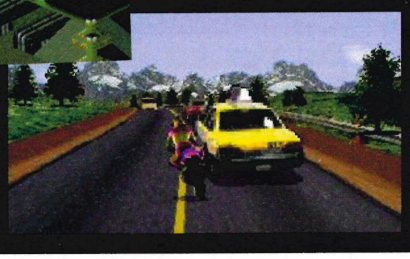
Just before we went to press Electronic Arts made an exciting announcement. No, it's not the latest *FIFA* update or a movie licence. The publisher is plundering its back catalogue for a collection that will be exclusive to PSP. Scheduled for release on 15 November the compilation will feature 14 games from the Nineties with multi-player on some and a selection of unlockables such as game art.

The full list is as follows:
B.O.B.
Budokan
Desert Strike
Jungle Strike
Haunting Starring Polterguy
Mutant League Football
Road Rash I-III
Syndicate
Ultima: The Black Gate
Virtual Pinball
Wing Commander
Wing Commander: Secret Missions

Prepare for some cracking chopper action



Syndicate was a top strategy game in its day



It may look dateda but Road Rash is still a great laugh

UK CHARTS

We've been keeping an eye on...

POS	TITLE	PUBLISHER	IN THREE SECONDS
01	CARS	THQ	The movie helps propel this to the top even though it's not that good. The movie, that is.
02	GRAND THEFT AUTO: LIBERTY CITY STORIES	ROCKSTAR	Interest in the forthcoming *Vice City Stories* shifts a few more copies of this crim sim.
03	PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 5	KONAMI	A lower price point for *Pro Evo* helps it get one up on *FIFA* and creep into the top three.
04	STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT II	LUCASARTS	A re-entry for this awesome *Star Wars* game shows that Lucas' franchise is still going strong.
05	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST	BUENA VISTA	Still hanging around in the top ten and shivering timbers up and down the country.
06	DAXTER	SCEE	Even without Jak the crazy critter still holds his own and manages to climb back up the charts.
07	JUICED: ELIMINATOR	THQ	Pimped-out rides and illegal racing prove a hit with PSP owners. *Juiced* is ahead of the pack.
08	MIAMI VICE: THE GAME	VIVENDI UNIVERSAL	A lukewarm box office reception sees this movie tie-in drop slightly. The film is quite good though.
09	LOCOROCO	SCEE	The crazy blobs have been bouncing up and down the charts all month and remain in the top ten.
10	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2006	SEGA	If footy management is your thing then it really doesn't get any better than this.
11	FIFA STREET 2	EA	After the World Cup everyone seems to want something a little more... light-hearted.
12	FIFA 06	EA	The World Cup version disappears to be replaced by the regular edition. Four more years of hurt.
13	BURNOUT LEGENDS	EA	No change for *Burnout* as it adopts the 'slow and steady wins the race' attitude.
14	FORMULA ONE 06	SCEE	Now Jenson Button has actually won a race you'd think people would 'lap' this up. You fickle bunch.
15	TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND	EIDOS	Lara falls more than ten places but manages to deploy her grappling hook in time to stop here.
16	VIRTUA TENNIS: WORLD TOUR	SEGA	Tennis fever still lingers as people try to get Henman to the finals. Good luck!
17	TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL ESSENTIALS	UBISOFT	Fisher stealthily climbs one place. At this rate we'll be here all year.
18	WORMS: OPEN WARFARE	THQ	Blowing the crap out of each other's worms clearly has an appeal on lazy summer afternoons.
19	LEMMINGS	SCEE	Despite making a suicidal bid to leave the top 20, those crazy Lemmings just cling onto the bottom.
20	SUPER MONKEY BALL ADVENTURE	SEGA	The monkeys have been rolling up and down the top 20 and are back where they were last month!

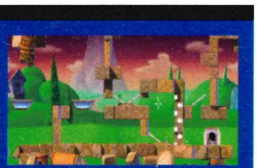
Cars
A rather simplistic racer but one that captures the style of the film well. Should appeal to little ones who enjoyed the flick, but others may find it a little too easy.

Daxter
This isn't exactly overflowing with originality, but it manages to be an entertaining slice of platforming action all the same particularly for fans of the series.

Tomb Raider: Legend
Despite some dodgy controls and camera issues, Lara still provides a solid and engaging adventure. The multi-player stuff is also pretty cool and it adds some longevity.

Star Wars Battlefront II
The only proper *Star Wars* game on PSP so far and it'll be a tough one to beat even though the controls are tricky to master. The Force is strong.

FIFA Street 2
Annoying and a bit rubbish on every other console, *FIFA Street* actually works really well on PSP. Maybe that has something to do with the lack of commentary.



Lemmings
Not every level is brand new, but the Lemmings are just as addictive as you remember. It's still just as tough, but may be a little too tough for some. Very addictive though.

RELEASE LIST

LOTS OF JUICY ANNOUNCEMENTS THIS MONTH HAVE BOLSTERED THE LIST SOMEWHAT AND THE FUTURE IS LOOKING BRIGHT FOR PLAYSTATION PORTABLE

OCTOBER

50 CENT: BULLETPROOF – G-UNIT EDITION
Vivendi

ATV OFFROAD FURY PRO
SCEE

BLADE DANCER: LINEAGE OF LIGHT
Ignition

CAPCOM PUZZLE WORLD
Capcom

THE CON
Southpeak

DAVE MIRRA BMX CHALLENGE
Crave

ANDY'S LOOKING FORWARD TO...
DAVE MIRRA BMX CHALLENGE

■ Extreme sports are great and chucking yourself about on a BMX is tremendous fun. Doing it in a game is even better as there's no chance of smashing your face on the concrete.

DUNGEON SIEGE: THRONE OF AGONY
2K Games

FORD STREET RACING: LA DUEL
Xplosiv

HOT **GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY STORIES**
Rockstar

THE HUSTLE: DETROIT STREETS
Koch Media

KAZOOK
Xplosiv

MYST
Midway

NASCAR 07
Electronic Arts

NBA 07
SCEE

NBA LIVE 07
Electronic Arts

PLAYWIZE POKER & CASINO
505 Gamestreet

POWER STONE COLLECTION
Capcom

HOT **PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 6**
Konami

RIDGE RACER 2
SCEE

SCARFACE: MONEY. POWER. RESPECT.
Vivendi

TAITO LEGENDS: POWER UP
Xplosiv

NOVEMBER

ASTERIX & OBELIX XXL 2: MISSION LAS VEGUM
Atari

BOMBERMAN
Konami

CAPCOM CLASSIC COLLECTION: RELOADED
Capcom

ERAGON
Vivendi

HOT **KILLZONE: LIBERATION**
SCEE

SIMON'S LOOKING FORWARD TO...
KILLZONE: LIBERATION

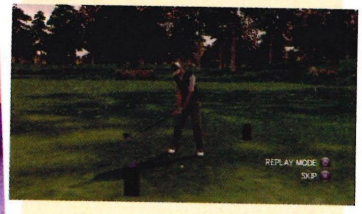
■ Now I've played this I can't wait to get my hands on the finished article. The single-player is great, the multi-player is great, it looks great, plays great – it's the whole package. Great!

MARVEL: ULTIMATE ALLIANCE
Activision

NEED FOR SPEED CARBON
Electronic Arts

PAINKILLER: HELL WARS
DreamCatcher Int.

PROSTROKE GOLF – WORLD TOUR 2007
Oxygen



SCOOBY-DOO! WHO'S WATCHING WHO
THQ

HOT **SONIC RIVALS**
Sega

HOT **TONY HAWK'S PROJECT 8**
Activision

HOT **WWE SMACKDOWN VS RAW 2007**
THQ

DECEMBER

STAR WARS: LETHAL ALLIANCE
Ubisoft

TBA

300: MARCH TO GLORY
Eidos

ACE COMBAT X: SKIES OF DECEPTION
SCEE

APE ACADEMY 2
SCEE

ARTHUR AND THE MINIMOYS
Atari

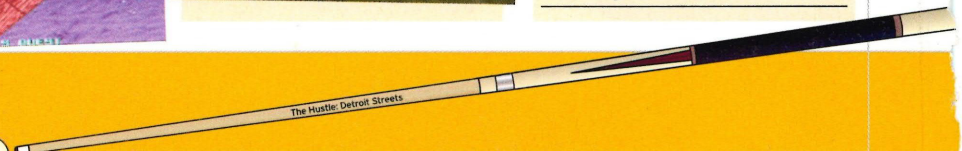
AVATAR: THE LAST AIRBENDER
THQ

BATTLEZONE
Atari

BLACK & WHITE CREATURES
THQ

BLISS ISLAND
Codemasters

BLITZ: THE LEAGUE
Midway



HOT **BROTHERS IN ARMS: D-DAY**
Ubisoft

HOT **CALL OF DUTY 3**
Activision

HOT **CANNON FODDER**
Codemasters

CASH MONEY CHAOS
SOE

CODED ARMS: CONTAGION
Konami

CRASH DUMMY VS THE EVIL D-TROIT
Schanz

CRISIS CORE: FINAL FANTASY VII
SquareEnix

DEAD HEAD FRED
D3Publisher

DEATH, JR. 2
Konami

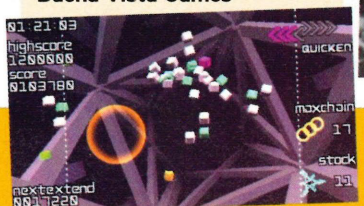
DUNGEONS & DRAGONS: TACTICS
Atari

DUNGEON EXPLORER
Hudson Entertainment

EARACHE EXTREME METAL RACING
Metro3D

EARTHWORM JIM
Atari

EVERY EXTEND EXTRA
Buena Vista Games



THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS: TOKYO DRIFT
Electronic Arts

FOOTBALL MANAGER 2007
Sega

GENERATION OF CHAOS
Nippon Ichi

GHOST RIDER
2K Games

HOT **GRAN TURISMO 4 MOBILE**
SCEE

GUILTY GEAR JUDGEMENT
THQ

HELLBOY
Konami

HOT PXL
Atari

JUSTICE LEAGUE HEROES
Eidos

LA RUSH
Midway

LUMINES II
Buena Vista Games

MARVEL TRADING CARD GAME
Konami

HOT **MEDAL OF HONOR: HEROES**
Electronic Arts

METAL GEAR SOLID DIGITAL COMIC
Konami

HOT **METAL GEAR SOLID: PORTABLE OPS**
Konami

METAL SLUG ANTHOLOGY
SNK

MLB '06: THE SHOW
SCEE

MORTAL KOMBAT UNCHAINED
Midway

MOTOGP
SCEE

ONLINE CHESS KINGDOMS
Konami

OPEN SEASON
Ubisoft

PUZZLE CHALLENGE: CROSSWORDS AND MORE!
Crave

HOT **RATCHET & CLANK: SIZE MATTERS**
SCEE

TOM'S LOOKING FORWARD TO...
RATCHET & CLANK: SIZE MATTERS

■ I'm a sucker for platform games and the next in this great series has really got me excited. Let's hope it can live up to the quality PS2 titles.

SEGA MEGA DRIVE COLLECTION
Sega

HOT **SILENT HILL ORIGINS**
Konami

SIMS 2: PETS
Electronic Arts

SOCOM US NAVY SEALS FIRETEAM BRAVO 2
SCEE

SPINOUT
Ghostlight

STACKED WITH DANIEL NEGREANU
Eidos

STAR TREK: TACTICAL ASSAULT
Bethesda Softworks

DAVE'S LOOKING FORWARD TO...
STAR TREK: TACTICAL ASSAULT

■ I must say I'm something of a closet Trekkie. I don't go to conventions or anything, but I'll happily sit through an episode or movie any day of the week. Unsurprisingly, I can't wait to take the helm in *Tactical Assault*.

STEEL HORIZONS
Konami

STREET SUPREMACY
Konami

HOT **SUPERMAN RETURNS: THE VIDEOGAME**
Electronic Arts

TEST DRIVE UNLIMITED
Atari

THRILLVILLE
Atari

TOCA RACE DRIVER 3 CHALLENGE
Codemasters

TRAXION
LucasArts

WINX CLUB
Konami

WORLD OF POOL
Ghostlight

WTF
D3Publisher

YS: THE ARK OF NAPISHTIM
Konami

YU-GI-OH! GX
Konami

PSPOST

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JOYTECH™

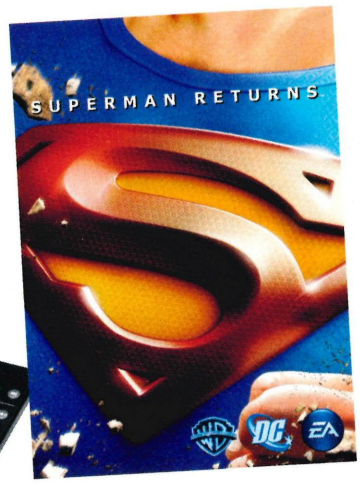
When it comes to PSP accessories, no one does it quite like JOYTECH. JOYTECH makes a whole range of PSP gear that's always high on quality and easy on the pocket. The Media Amp is simply one of the best accessories around and essential for every movie-lovin' PSP owner! Check out the full range at **www.joytech.net**. Plus, we have a sensational Media Amp to give away every month to one lucky reader...

Got something on your mind? Let us know! We might be able to help. Or you might just want to tell us an interesting story. It doesn't have to be PSP related but try to avoid telling us your life story if possible. Just make us laugh or vaguely interested and you could be a winner!

Super trooper

After seeing *Superman Returns* at the cinema the other day and thoroughly enjoying it, I found myself wondering what happened to the game. I thought it was slated for release around the same time as the film but obviously not. Where is it?
Henry Stewart, via email

The *Superman Returns* videogame is still coming out, but unfortunately it just wasn't ready for release at the same time as the film. This actually bodes well for the game, as it shows EA is trying to make it as good as possible rather than rushing it out to make a quick buck. We've seen some footage of the next-gen version and it does look very nice. How the PSP edition is shaping up is a mystery, but we'll keep our X-ray eyes peeled to find out some more info soon. It looks like the game will get a November release so you shouldn't have too long to wait.



UMD confusion

Just a quick question regarding the top 10 UMD movies in your last issue. You featured both *Die Hard* and *Terminator 2*, which I haven't seen on sale here in the UK. I thought *Die Hard* was a Region 1 title and I wasn't aware that *Terminator 2* had even been released, although I know the original *Terminator* and *Terminator 3* are out so I was just wondering where you got them.
Steven Allan, via email

Sorry for any confusion, Steven. *Die Hard* and *Terminator 2* are both available on Region 1 UMD, but not on Region 2 as you correctly noticed. So, if you don't have a US PSP then unfortunately you won't be able to watch them. The problem with the list arose when Dep Ed Simon insisted that *Die Hard* be included in the top 10 as he claims it's the greatest movie ever committed to celluloid. We told him it was only available on Region 1, but he argued that as he owns a Region 1 PSP that it was okay to

F.A.Q.

Mail to: goplay@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Putting out the fires of those burning PSP questions

> After reading your review of *LocoRoco* I rushed out and bought the game. Imagine my disappointment when I discovered that it's incredibly repetitive and unbelievably easy to complete. And the music is crap. Why did you give it such a generous score?
Peter Smith, Dartford
Well, each to their own, Pete. We found *LocoRoco* to be one of the most innovative titles of the year. Are you sure that you found everything there was to find in every level? If you got through the game that quickly then we very much doubt it. Stop being such a grinch and give it another go.

> I'm after some movie content for my PSP. Just some trailers and stuff, nothing too exciting. Any idea where I can get some decent stuff?
George Talbot, Portsmouth
No problem, just turn to our Connect section this month and you'll find an entire page dedicated to that very subject, enjoy!

> Why don't you give away a free UMD every month? That would make the magazine fly off shelves.
Tim Jenkins, Cardiff
If only, Tim. Unfortunately, not only would Sony not allow us to do such a thing, but the UMDs are incredibly expensive to produce, which would almost certainly mean a substantial increase in the price of the magazine.

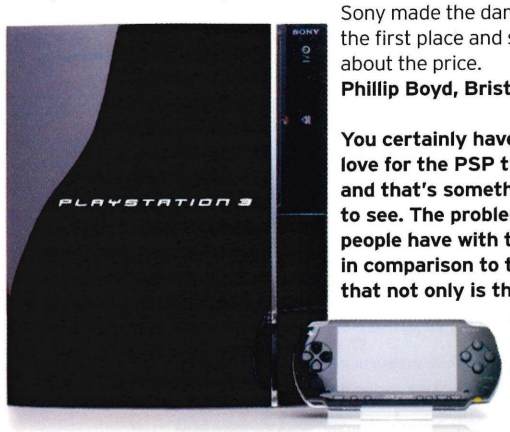
STAR LETTER

STAR LETTER
Joytech Media Amp for every star letter

Price is right

Why does everyone keep on moaning about the price of the PSP and bugging Sony for a reduction? The PSP is a fantastic piece of kit that is far more than just a game machine. I think it is still yet to reach its full potential and only after the release of the PS3 will people realise what an amazing machine it really is. All those people who are buying a DS just because it's cheaper are missing out on what is, in my opinion, the best handheld ever produced. Just be happy that Sony made the damn thing in the first place and stop going on about the price.

Phillip Boyd, Bristol



You certainly have plenty of love for the PSP there, Phil, and that's something we love to see. The problem we think people have with the PSP in comparison to the DS is that not only is the Nintendo console a great deal cheaper but it also has a bigger range of titles available for it. We agree that once PS3 comes out PSP will undoubtedly become an important piece of kit, but will people who just forked out in the region of £500 really want to spend approximately £150 more on another console? Console prices, especially those of ones that seem to under perform, are always a hot topic, but as it stands at the moment the PSP has sold well, so why would Sony cut the price? It's also worth remembering that Sony will not be making a great deal of profit on the PS3, even at the high price that has been rumoured, so they need to bring the cash in somehow.

include it. It's unlikely either of those movies will see a release on UMD over here seeing as how the format has been pretty much deserted by almost every distributor. Don't forget that there are MPEG4 recorders available, which will allow you to record your DVDs onto decent-sized memory sticks, so you can still watch those movies on a PSP if you already own them on DVD.

Is Die Hard the greatest movie ever made? Damn right it is!

We'd rather concentrate on making the magazine as good and as affordable as possible for everyone. Anyway there are plenty of demos and other content available for download from the Internet and with PlayStation Spots becoming more common the need for a demo disc is becoming redundant.

› I entered one of your competitions but I didn't win! Why not?
Anon, via email

You're probably one of the many people who keep emailing us competition entries with just the answer and nothing else. If you want a chance of winning we'll need your name and contact details so we can send out the prize. Better luck next time.

› When will Sony release more than just black and white PSPs? DS is available in loads of colours!
Brian Finch, Brighton

Well, as you can see from the news section this month a pink PlayStation Portable will available very soon. Of course, that might not appeal, but unfortunately it looks like that's all that Sony has planned for the time being. If you really want to change the appearance of your PSP, you can always get a PSP skin from Wrapstar. Then, if you get bored with that design you can just switch it for another one.

HOT TOPIC

What's been happening on the forum?

PS3 in general

Posted Thu Jul 20, 2006 4:37 pm
Ranzach
Why is PS3 getting this bad press?!? Sure, it's a bit pricey, but Sony is selling it cheaper than it is making it - hoping that licensing deals will fill in the gaps. People say PS3 is going to crash and burn, but they forget one thing: Sony is awesome. As it has proved over the years by making a console that will still outsell a 'next-gen' machine six-seven years after launch. PSOne was legendary, PS2 was better. What the hell is PS3 going to be like? Hypothetically, if it does flop and I spend hard-earned cash on it. Aggression will be built and CHAVS WILL DIE!

Posted Thu Jul 20, 2006 4:53 pm
Kalcaron
People say things, it's what people do. Blah, blah, blah. Most of the time they just make it up as they go along, just so they can make noises come out of their faces. The real fools though, are the fools that listen to them.

Posted Thu Jul 20, 2006 5:06 pm
Ranzach
Touché crazy man. Touché.

Posted Thu Jul 20, 2006 5:08 pm
Kalcaron
Crazy?
I think the word you're looking for is 'sensible'.

Posted Thu Jul 20, 2006 5:14 pm
Raine
Quote: "Why is PS3 getting this bad press?"
Its price.
It's coming in two packs.
It's more PC than console.
It has new DVD technology that no one wants.
Its price.
People keep thinking they copy Nintendo, which is fundamentally wrong.
Its online sounds rubbish.
Its price

Mucky pup

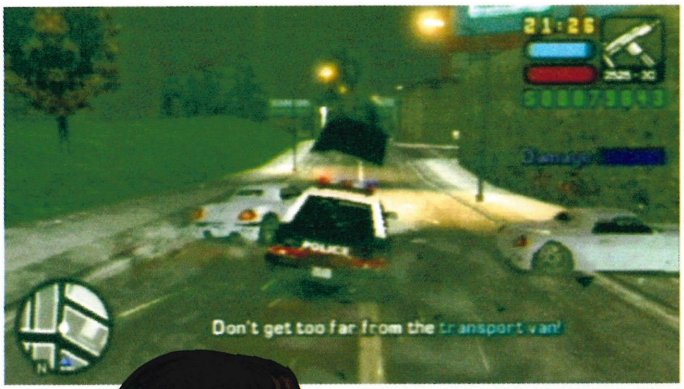
I've managed to get fingerprints all over my UMDs and as you probably know, they're not the easiest things to clean. Do you know what the best way to clean one is? Can a UMD be taken apart and put back together? Please help me with this problem, *Go>Play*!
Richard Evans, Sevenoaks

While UMDs can be taken apart pretty easily we wouldn't recommend it as not only do you run the risk of snapping the plastic as you do it, but also you'll probably need to glue it back together, which is guaranteed to end in tears. You can either clean the disc through the gap with a cloth - a lengthy process that will probably yield mixed results, or you can invest in a motorised UMD cleaner from Gamexpert for only £9.99, which will do all the hard work for you. Easy, huh?

Guidance needed

Will you guys be printing a guide to *Vice City Stories*? I know this is a bit premature, but the one you printed for *Liberty City Stories* all those months ago was top notch and helped me get to the end, so it would be comforting to know I can rely on *Go>Play* to do the same again for *Vice City*.
Keith Campbell, London

Don't worry Keith I'm sure we'll be able to provide a detailed walkthrough for you and all the other *GTA* fans out there. Enjoy our exclusive preview for now.



Later *GTA* missions always get tough so we'll be on hand to help you out

go>play

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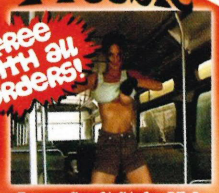

Lara Croft Strip Vid

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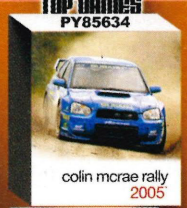

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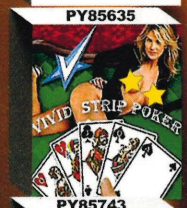

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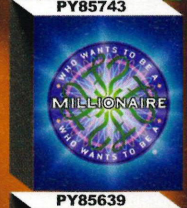

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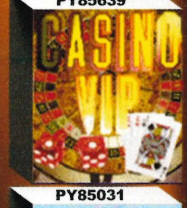

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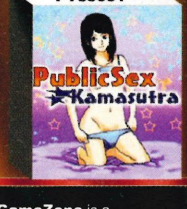

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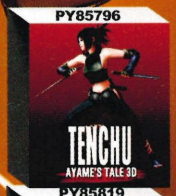

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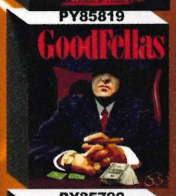

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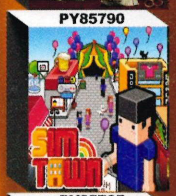

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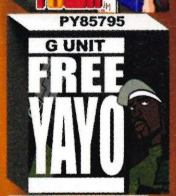

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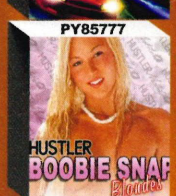

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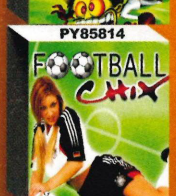

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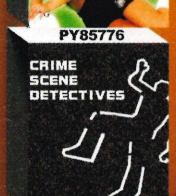

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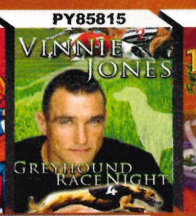

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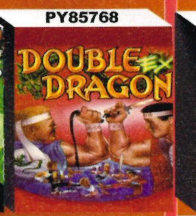

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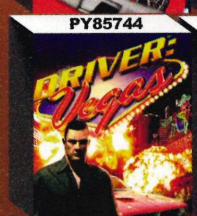

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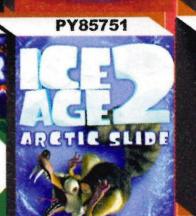

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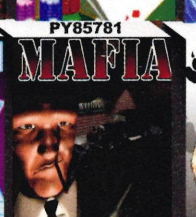

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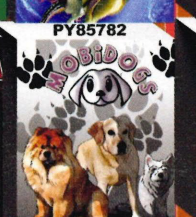

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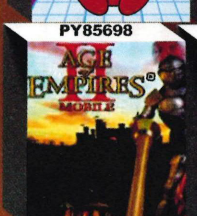

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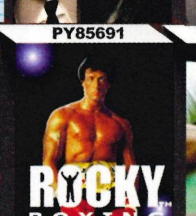

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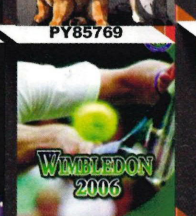

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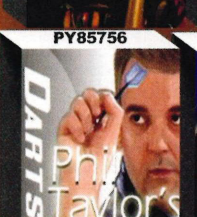

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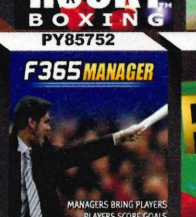

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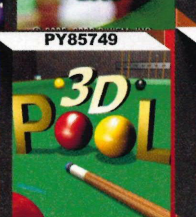

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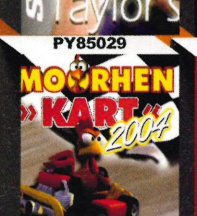

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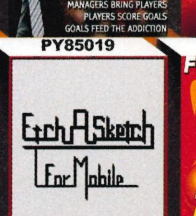

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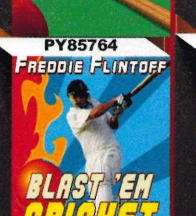

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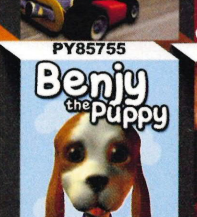

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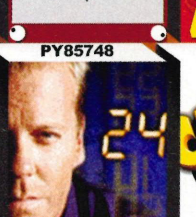

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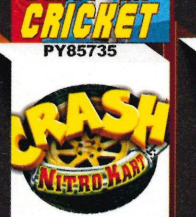

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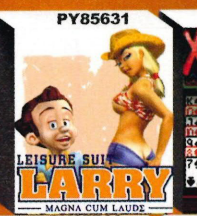

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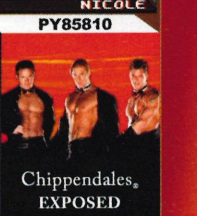

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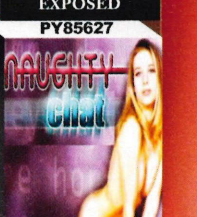

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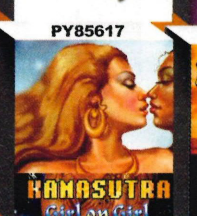

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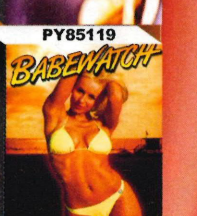

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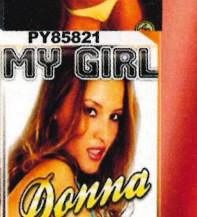

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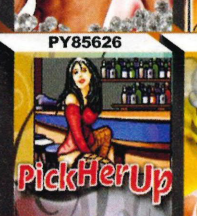

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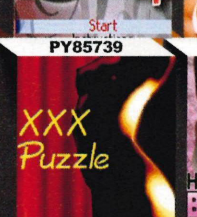

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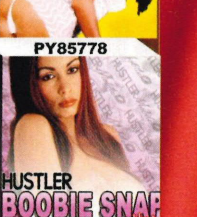

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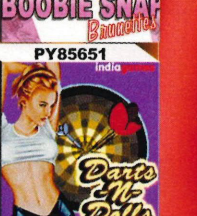


The battle against the Helghast continues...

KILLZONE: LIBERATION

OUT: NOV '06

Publisher **SCEE** / Developer **Guerilla** / Players **1-6**

WHAT IS IT?

The PS2 FPS gets squeezed onto the PSP and given a new viewpoint, new missions and awesome multi-player modes.

EXPRESS CHECKOUT

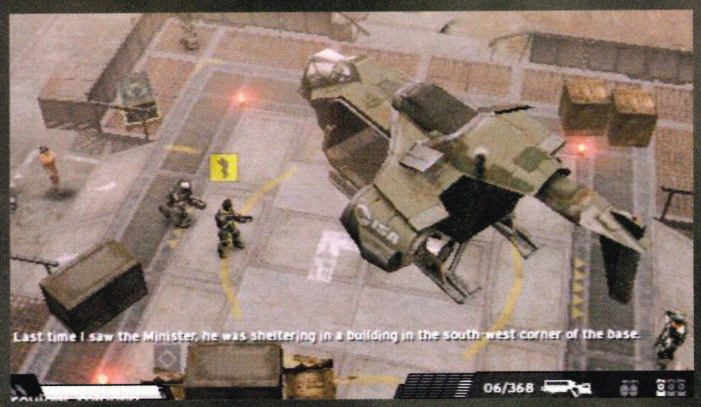
- 16 missions over four chapters
- Multi-player death matches
- Story follows on from PS2 *Killzone*
- Downloadable content
- Two-player co-op mode

When we first heard *Killzone* was heading to PSP, we initially thought, "Okay, sounds good, but first person shooters haven't worked well on PSP so far". Then we saw the screenshots and changed that to, "Cool, a third person perspective, that ought to work better". After what seemed like months of waiting we finally played an early version before E3 and said, "It's looking to be one of the best releases on the handheld yet" - and that was just after a sampling of the multi-player. Imagine our glee, then, when a preview UMD arrived in the office. We hastily slotted it into the PSP and got cracking.

The story follows on from the first *Killzone* game on PS2. The battle against the Helghast rages on with General Metrac using brutal measures to gain an advantage. Once again in the shoes of Templar you must undertake a mission to rescue captured ISA hostages and turn the tide of the war.

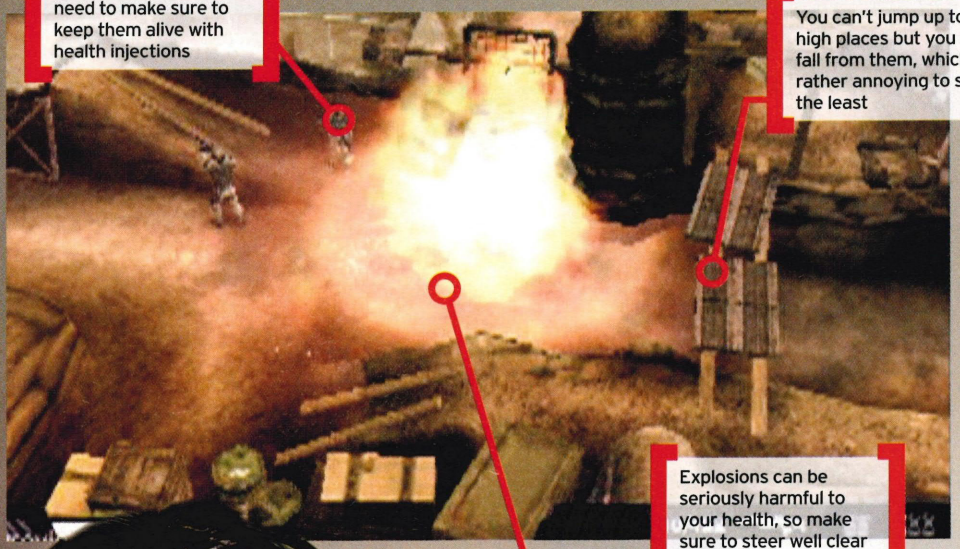
What first hit us about the next instalment in the series was just how great it looks. Of course, we'd seen it before but that was in a crowded room hunched over a well thumb smudged PSP. Looking closely in the serenity of the office the graphics really stand out, with detailed backgrounds and loads of impressive little spot effects. The main reason for the game looking that nice is that the PSP doesn't have to draw in acres of background as the camera angle only allows you to see the immediate area. While this might sound limiting at first, the levels are designed so that you never need to see that far. Not only that but the camera will zoom in and out focusing in on the action when it occurs, which not only helps make the action a great deal more dynamic but also ensures you are aware of enemy movements.

It's this enemy movement that was another element that impressed us. While we were disappointed to see some enemies simply stand there like cannon fodder, others actively seek cover and will do everything they can



The environments look really cool and convey the sense of being in a warzone

Multi-player co-op is great fun and adds a new dimension to the missions



to ensure your downfall without endangering themselves. Hopefully the AI will be tightened up some more for the finished article but as it stands it's still pretty good. The game certainly doesn't make things easy on you and we found ourselves playing the same sections repeatedly, but simply approaching them in a different way or with a different weapon solved most problems. Checkpoints break up the levels so if you do perish then you don't need to go back to the beginning of the level. Most of these were in just the right place but some seemed a little far apart, which got irritating. The other problem is that you can't save during a mission and some of them are quite long. Basically if you do need to stop playing in the middle of a mission for whatever reason then tough luck, you'll just have to lose your progress.

As far as the missions go there are 16 in all, spread over four chapters. The version we played only contains the first half of the game so imagine our disappointment when the game ended after the eighth mission. We're not kidding, by the time we'd reached

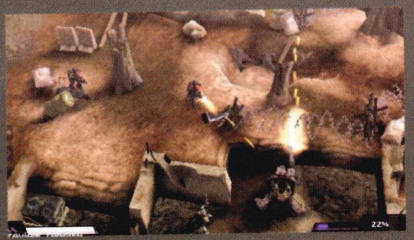
This nasty looking piece of work is high up the chain of command in the Helghast and needs to be put out of your misery

Sir, yes sir!

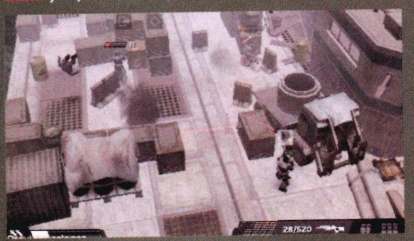
Command and conquer

Ordering your comrades around is pleasingly simple and usually yields good results. Whether you simply want them to take cover while you deal with some particularly aggressive Helghast troops or you want them to keep the enemy occupied while you flank them, the AI seems solid enough that they rarely do something unexpected. The interface also ensures that there's no confusion as to exactly what your orders entail, which is nice.

Should definitely see the handheld ending the year on a high



Mounted guns are ready and waiting for you to jump in and let rip



Most areas present plenty of opportunities for cover, and you'll need it

that point we were so into the whole thing we really didn't want it to end.

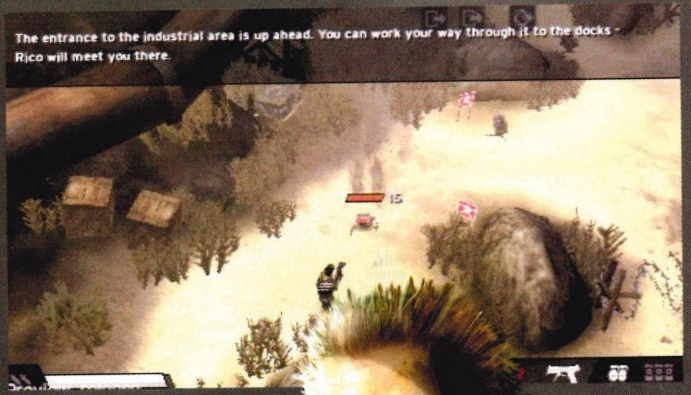
Thankfully the multi-player modes were in this version so we scoured the office for an opponent and got to it. The Deathmatch mode was the preferred choice and allows up to six players to fight it out on six different maps. Gameplay is similar to the single-player experience with most participants using the available cover to take pot shots at opponents. Running in, guns blazing can sometimes work but it all depends on what weapon your opponent has. If it's a shotgun or sniper rifle you can say goodnight. The item crates also become a focal point of matches as each player gravitates toward them to refresh their ammo supply, grab a new weapon or revitalise themselves with that all-important health. Once again like the Story mode, the supplies in each crate are somewhat limited (although there's plenty to go around if you don't get greedy) and you are still vulnerable while rooting around inside them.

Along with the deathmatch is the option to play the story missions in a co-op mode with a friend. The missions are exactly the same and it has to be said that having an extra gun definitely makes things easier. You can't stray too far from each other, even though you're playing on different screens, but why would you really want to, it's supposed to be co-operative after all.

As well as the single and multi-player modes there is the most intriguing inclusion of the word 'Downloads' on the main menu, which suggest perhaps that there will be new multi-player maps or skins available after release. You never know, they might provide new single-player missions, but we don't rate the chances of that too highly.

Whether extra content is provided after the release or not, *Killzone* still looks to be one of the best PSP releases yet and should definitely see the handheld ending the year on a high. ■ **Simon Griffin**

WE SAY ***Killzone*** **is a fantastic game either on your own or with friends; we can't wait to get our hands on the finished product.**



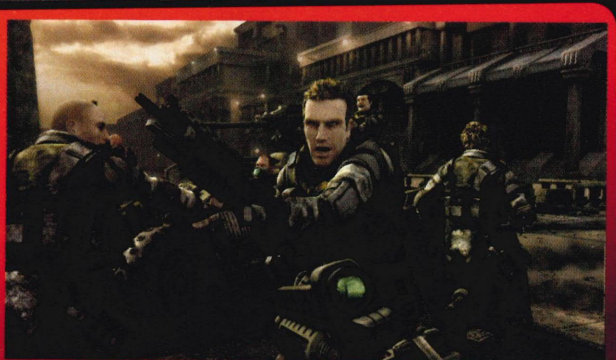
The entrance to the industrial area is up ahead. You can work your way through it to the docks - Rico will meet you there.

The dastardly Helghast set minefields all over the place to catch you unawares. Some mines will even get up and scurry towards you! Run away!

Next-gen Killzone

The evolution of a franchise

You can't really talk about *Killzone* without mentioning the PS3 version that's on the way. Most of you have probably seen the screenshots and trailer by now and are getting excited about it. Whether any crosstalk functions between the PSP and PS3 versions will be implemented is not yet known but that 'Downloads' option on the menu could potentially open up the possibility of transferring characters or weapons from the PS3 version... maybe.



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It's air hockey but with a parrot for a puck, of course

Hit baseballs at geeks who are crashing your pool party, as you do

Fight for your right to party!

KAZOOK

EXPRESS CHECKOUT
- 16 playable characters
- Wi-Fi multi-player for 27 games
- 5 Game Share games
- 3 solo game modes
- 30 different mini-games

OUT: 20 OCT

Publisher **Xplosiv** / Developer **MonteCristo** / Players **1-2**

WHAT IS IT?
A budget collection of utterly bizarre mini-games that can be played solo or with a mate.

Xplosiv's continued support of the PSP with its budget range of titles is nice to see. Okay so the games might not set the world alight but for 20 quid they're certainly better than some of the full price titles out there.

The next release from the publisher is this strangely named party game, which gives you a collection of 30 mini-games to have fun with. Most of these games suit the bizarre title, as they seem to have been thought up by a group of people who are clearly on medication of some sort (or at least should be). Witness the odd take on air hockey that replaces the puck with a parrot. Take on the role of a shark and leap from the depths to catch unlucky swimmers as they jump into the water. Censor some rappers before they say something regrettable on a radio show. Shoot zombies before they eat your girlfriend. There are some relatively normal games in there too such as a go kart racer but they are few and far between.

It's true to say that some of the games won't keep your attention for long but there's a fair few that will keep you coming back for more due to their addictive nature, especially if you hook up via Wi-Fi with a friend. Solo *KAZooK* is reasonable fun but this is really meant for multiple participants so it's nice to see both Game Sharing and hot-seat, PSP passing multi-player catered for, even if it is only for a small portion of the games.

If all these games were unlocked from the start then interest could wane rather quickly, but you need to purchase most of them by earning cash in those that are available to play from the start. Not only does this make you stick with the games that you might not warm to immediately but it also gives you an incentive to keep playing.

KAZooK doesn't do anything flashy and keeps things simple and sometimes that's just what you want from a portable game. It won't be to everyone's taste but it has the potential to be a thoroughly addictive slice of handheld fun, which we guess is the point. ■ **Simon Griffin**

> **Air hockey that replaces the puck with a parrot**

WE SAY **A mixed bag of mini-games that you'll either loathe or become hopelessly addicted to. Lasting appeal is questionable, however.**

Look out for the Feds when abducting people

Is it just us or does that zombie on the right look like Michael Jackson. Just us then...

Save your money to save the world

CASH MONEY CHAOS

OUT: Q1 '07

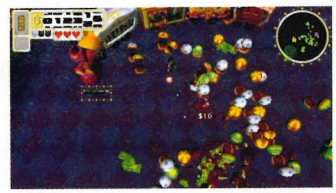
Publisher **Sony Online Entertainment**/ Developer **In-house** / Players **1-8**

WHAT IS IT?

You're captured by some aliens, made to compete in a game show and asked not only to save the human race but also to make yourself a fat pile of cash in the process

Remember the last time you were abducted by aliens? The writhing tentacles, the advanced technology and, of course, all that intrusive probing? Well, now it seems they are back to make amends by not only offering you the chance to be Earth's saviour but also to earn a truck load of paper too. Sound strange? Well, if you're going to play this game you'd better get used to it. In one of the most bizarre game briefs we've heard to date, in *Cash Money Chaos* you're captured by aliens, thrown into a Seventies-themed game show with other alien races and made to compete in various challenges to save your respective home planets. Far from the game shows you might be used to, *CMC* doesn't involve quick-fire questions or the Ready Money Round; it kits you out with a big gun and tasks you with shooting everything that comes your way – a 'Ready Bloody Round' if you like.

While one of the aims of this arcade-shooter is to save the human race, there's nothing like a bit of the green stuff to make it worth your while, in fact, in this game cash is your collateral and the more you collect the more chance of success you have. Money that's been stockpiled can be exchanged for weapons, power-ups and prizes, but just like down on Earth, you won't get anything for nothing. To earn the most cash and win the game you have to work through over 50 episodes set anywhere from graveyards to circus tents and with them come swarms of deranged enemies, including homicidal clowns, mutant hillbillies and alien chickens. Once you've annihilated each environment's unusual inhabitants, you have to go head-to-head with an equally unnerving boss to win.



If all this sounds a bit daunting, don't panic as Sony plans to take full advantage of the PSP's network capabilities by offering both local and Internet play for up to eight players. You can choose to team up and play co-operatively or kill for the cash in one of the prize-laden deathmatches. With difficulty levels ranging from wuss to bad ass, *Cash Money Chaos* promises plenty of replay value and its gloriously nonsensical plot might just help the PSP 'out-kook' the DS for once.

■ **Keith Hennessey**

> **Enemies include homicidal clowns and alien chickens**

EXPRESS CHECKOUT

- Play through over 50 unique episodes
- Eight-player versus mode
- Online leaderboards and stat tracking
- Huge variety of collectables and enemies
- 2-4-player co-op Game Show mode

WE SAY **By all accounts, this is shaping up to be a kind of modern-day *Smash TV* with plenty of carnage, cash and hopefully creativity.**

So much to kill, so little time; but in this game more bodies mean bigger bucks

Who knew that killing deformed chickens could earn you all that money... no wonder the Colonel's so rich

Don't hire these clowns to perform at your kid's party – it could get messy

A pain-inducing chair in someone's dungeon? Kinky

DUNGEON SIEGE: THRONE OF AGONY

OUT: OCT '06

Publisher **2K Games** / Developer **Supervillain Studios** / Players **1-2**

WHAT IS IT?
The latest iteration of a previously PC-only dungeon-crawling series, designed from scratch exclusively for the PSP.

EXPRESS CHECKOUT
- Four Characters, with eight Hero and 16 Legendary classes
- Over a hundred spells, weapons and armour to collect
- Aerial and water-based vehicles for extended travel
- Over a hundred monsters – many from previous games
- 16 unique pets and companions to aid sieges

Whichever way you look at it, *Dungeon Siege: Throne Of Agony* is a risky project for those developing and publishing it. It's the fifth instalment of a dungeon-crawling series that has previously only appeared on PC – a platform with a category of gamers who have very specific tastes. Hardcore PC gamers (the only ones likely to be interested in a grind-heavy dungeon-based game like *Throne Of Agony*), are unlikely to be interested in the world of portable gaming. So it raises worrying questions as to who 2K Games thinks the target audience are and also, the suitability of putting a game that's meant for computers on a portable Japanese console. Will it encourage fans of the series to invest in Sony's hardware, and will current PSP owners be interested in it?

The original titles received starkly different critiques, some proclaiming it the most boring game on computers and others championing it as the best dungeon crawler available. The first three were published by Microsoft – implying some degree of quality – but the fourth (and soon to be fifth) switched over to 2K Games. Curiously, the series was originally started by Gas Powered Games in 2002, but this fifth iteration is being developed by Supervillain Studios; a relatively new company working on several different projects. If *Throne Of Agony* is to appeal to established fans, will a new (outsourced) developer working with the original source material be able to retain the qualities that make *Dungeon Siege* appealing?

Conversely, a new developer approaching it from a fresh angle might be precisely what *Throne Of Agony* needs to take advantage of the PSP's strengths and appeal to its very different user demographic. But if you're going to dramatically change the formula to appeal to non-fans, why use the *Dungeon Siege* licence to begin with? The existence of *Dungeon Siege: Throne Of Agony* as a PSP-exclusive title raises many questions, so we'll have to wait and see what kind of direction Supervillain Studios takes it in and what kind of market niche it will be able to fill. Hopefully it won't disappoint. ■

John Szczepaniak

> **PSP needs a new developer approaching from a fresh angle**

WE SAY **A curious decision to bring a typically PC genre to PSP, but no doubt there'll be gamers wanting to play *Dungeon Siege* on the move.**

This isn't like Japanese RPGs – it's typically Western in design and style

Escape from a makeshift prison; 15 hours with Mercenary and Elite modes

You have to guess the right witch. We could say more but then we risk making it sound 'deep'

No one understood this puzzle. Press the shoulder buttons and cause an earthquake. Huh?

Winx doesn't rhyme with anything rude. Damn

WINX CLUB: JOIN THE CLUB

OUT: Q4 '06

Publisher **Konami** / Developer **In-house** / Players **1**

WHAT IS IT?

It's hard to describe without using banned words in the magazine such as [censored], [censored] and AIDS, so we'll play the 'it's for girls' card, point to the distance and run the other way while everyone's distracted.

EXPRESS CHECKOUT

- Six characters, we think
- Some weird boss thing
- Lots of rubbish mini-games
- Five worlds
- All on one UMD

Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories, *LocoRoco*, *Tekken Dark Resurrection* and now... *Winx Club*. A game that makes you jump over tables and float up a hill, guessing which witch, and dancing to cast spells. A game that will remind you that for every passing second of your existence on this Earth, you're slowly dying, and what's more, you're wasting those valuable seconds trying to guess which witch by remembering if the witch was wearing high heels or trainers. So this is what dying feels like. Pass the Werther's Originals.

When you're not a member of the fairer sex, playing a game so heavily dosed in girlishness is tough, as you find yourself choking on the perfume and waving the pretty flowers away. Unless there are last-minute plans to bring in Vin Diesel to growl the voices, sniper rifle sections and stealthy instant kills, that's how it's going to remain.

[So this is what dying feels like. Pass the Werther's Originals...]

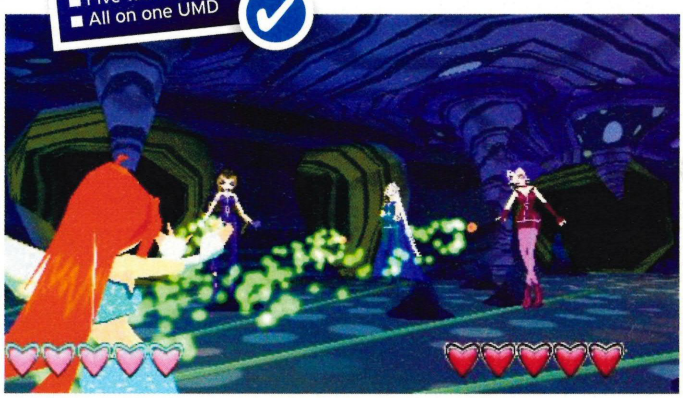
There's only so much girl-power air-punching you can take as the "WE ARE THE WINX!" theme tune stabs your eardrums.

If you are a girl then hey, lucky you, there are plenty of mini-games for you to play. As previously alluded to, they involve jumping over tables (run up and down while pressing ⊗), floating up a hill (run left and right while pressing ⊗), guessing which witch (point at the right witch and press ⊗) and dancing to cast spells (memorise the D-pad directions and give the ⊗ button a rest). No, we're not making any of those up – those are actual mini-games in the actual maxi-game. There are five worlds to explore on the map, which seems to be different shades of the same girly mini-games, and everything is tied together by cartoon cut-scenes. And yes! The Internet does indeed tell us that *Winx Club* is a cartoon for girls, complete with pink webpages and some other girly stuff.

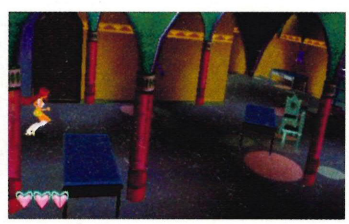
This will probably slot in the 'parents looking for a game to buy for their daughter's PSP' genre, which it should have safely sown up. Will it appeal even slightly to boys? Will Vin Diesel end up doing the voice acting after all? Will *Winx Club* ever get mentioned in the same sentence as *Grand Theft Auto* again? Find out in the definitive review soon if you dare. ■

Ryan King

WE SAY **We could say this is shaping up to be a load of 'winx' but that would just be plain rude. Instead... oh, screw it. This is going to be a load of winx.**



All three witches make an "Uhh" sound at the same time. Remember the flying dog in the *Tenchu* review a couple of issues ago? This is funnier



EXPRESS CHECKOUT
- 24 officially licensed vehicles (6 new for PSP)
- 37 tracks (7 new for PSP)
- 6 solo racing modes
- 11 team racing modes
- Wi-Fi solo and team races

Does a spoiler really make you go faster? Actually it does, so there

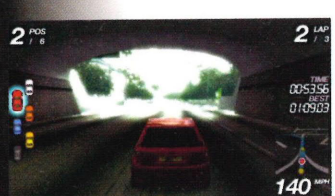
Forget your clapped out Mondeo...

FORD STREET RACING – LA DUEL

OUT: 27 OCT

Publisher **Xplosiv** / Developer **Razorworks** / Players **1-6**

WHAT IS IT?
Take a multitude of classic and new Ford motors around the sun-kissed streets of LA.



Allow us to be blunt for a moment – *Ford Racing* games have never exactly set the world alight. It's not that Razorworks haven't put the effort in or that the games are particularly bad, it's perhaps that the Ford name just doesn't carry the same weight over here as it does in the US. It's safe to say that the yanks have kept the series alive with their love of the Ford brand and have helped it make the transition to the PSP.

The racing market isn't as competitive on Sony's handheld as it is on PS2, what with *Gran Turismo* still failing to make an appearance and many of the other releases simply being uninspired ports of PS2 games. Hopefully this means that *Ford Street Racing* will get a chance to stand out in the crowd like it deserves to. And it certainly does deserve a chance to shine as not only is it actually a solid little racing game but it will also be released at the bargain price point of £19.99.

> Has some **nifty little features** to **liven** up proceedings

Those of you familiar with the series may not be particularly inspired yet, but this PSP iteration has some nifty little features up its sleeve to liven up proceedings. While previous versions have contained passable but relatively uninspired racing, this latest addition adds some interesting team elements. This sees you taking control of not one but two cars during a race. Obviously not at the same time, that would be silly. Instead you switch between them mid-race and the CPU drives whichever one you're not. As victory is based on points

Go>Play Interview

We chat to producer Ben Wilkins...

Go>Play: What do you think *Ford Street Racing – LA Duel* offers over other PSP racing titles?
Ben Wilkins: Well, from a gameplay point of view we think that the team control feature in *Ford Street Racing – LA Duel* offers a unique racing experience. When in team mode the player can not only switch between his two cars but also issue orders to his teammate in order to gain both a tactical and positional advantage. For example, the player can race one of his cars to the front of the pack, switch to his second car and order the leading car to block, hopefully slowing down his opponents and so allowing the player to move his second car through the field. Of course – the AI will also be using team-racing tactics – perhaps in this example an opposing team might keep their cars together and utilise the 'boost' command (where teammates slipstream each other down the straights) to get a significant speed bonus!

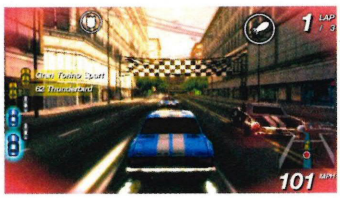
From a technical viewpoint we are really pleased with how *Ford* runs on the PSP. The game races along at over 30fps despite the fact that we are using the same models and track geometry as the PS2 version. This gives a rich, crisp and detailed environment not seen in some other games.

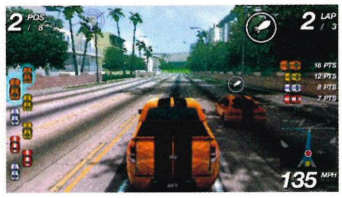
G>P: The team AI seems to work well, was it difficult to perfect?
BW: We've been making racing games for five years and the AI benefits from a vast amount of accumulated experience.

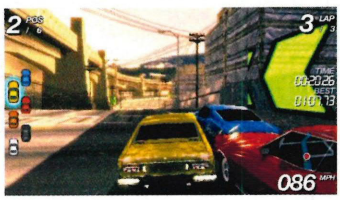
The AI has certainly profited from all the extra work done for the PSP version – and all the feedback from the PS2 version. Starting from a good level on a solid tech base allowed us to really develop the AI and implement a lot of new features such as multiple racing lines and differing skill levels for AI drivers. With the AI making a lot more use of varied team tactics

The Escort gets up to 70mph and that's about it. She canna take any more Cap'n!

There's plenty of bumping and grinding on the track, as the CPU cars are pretty aggressive





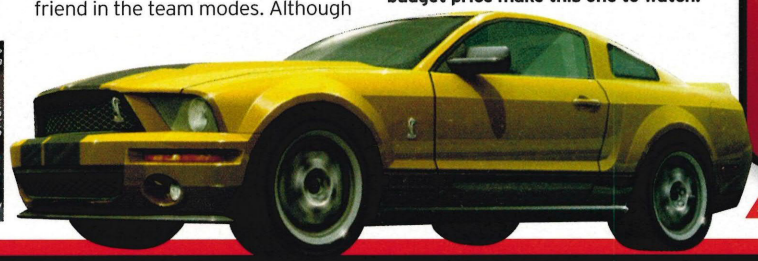


you'll need both cars to be near the front of the pack in order to be successful. Having one car first and the other last does not necessarily guarantee victory. While the CPU is competent enough behind the wheel, there's no substitute for a human in control so you'll need to switch regularly to ensure you cross that finish line first. The team tactics don't end there and you can also tell your CPU mate to block opponent cars so you can get past them or stop them catching up. You can also slipstream behind each other to get a valuable speed boost. This gives the team racing a strategic air to it and lends the game some much-needed variety. The only disappointment is you can only race against and not team up with a friend in the team modes. Although the commands and car swapping would obviously go out the window if you could, so it's understandable.

Of course, there are solo races too but the team stuff is what really makes *Ford Street Racing* a little different from everything else. The fact that it actually looks really nice too doesn't hurt. There's plenty more to talk about but we'll let the game's producer, Ben Wilkins, tell you more... ■ **Simon Griffin**

[The fact that it actually looks really nice too doesn't hurt]

WE SAY **Solid racing with some nice ideas at a budget price make this one to watch.**



The Mustang is a growling beast of a car

The line-up

For all you Ford fans out there here's the full list of models found in *Ford Street Racing*...

1962 Thunderbird Sports Roadster (PSP Exclusive)
1968 Mustang GT
1969 Mustang Boss 302
1970 Capri Mk I RS2600
1970 Mustang Boss 429
1971 Mustang Mach 1 (PSP Exclusive)
1973 Escort RS2000
1975 Gran Torino Sport
1985 RS200
1987 Sierra RS500
1992 Escort RS Cosworth
1995 GT90 Concept
2000 SVT Cobra R
2002 Focus RS
2004 Bronco Concept (PSP Exclusive)
2004 Fiesta ST
2004 Mustang GT-R Concept
2004 SVT Lightning
2005 Ford GT
2005 Mustang GT
2005 Shelby GR-1 Concept (PSP Exclusive)
2005 SVT Sport Trac Adrenalin Concept (PSP Exclusive)
2005 Thunderbird (PSP Exclusive)
2007 Shelby GT500

the player on the harder difficulty settings now has to think his way past opponents working as a team rather than simply 'flooring it'!

G>P: What were your reasons for choosing to base the game in LA over any other city? Was it an excuse for a nice holiday?
BW: Ha! Ha! Well, it's always nice to visit the west coast, especially when it's cold and grey over here. Actually gathering all the reference material to support 37 racing tracks in a city as large as LA was really hard work (honest!). The whole trip had to be planned like a military operation with a detailed timetable to make sure we covered everything.

We chose LA for a number of reasons - firstly, it is something of a landmark destination and so has worldwide appeal. Secondly, although the size of the city is intimidating it did mean there was a range of varied settings we could use in the game all within a couple of hours drive from our hotel. Thirdly, we thought that the west coast's slightly 'sun bleached' look would suit a game that featured a number of classic American 'muscle cars'.

G>P: Were there any Ford models you wanted to include but didn't? We wanted to thrash the classic Fiesta MkII round the track!
BW: There are always favourites you can't include for some reason. We thought that the 1970 Capri Mk I RS2600 might win the 'UK nostalgia vote'! Overall most of our top choices made it into the game.

G>P: Which element in the game are you most proud of?
BW: Whilst we really like the way the team gameplay has developed I think we are most proud of the way the game looks and runs on the PSP. We're obviously biased, but we think the game looks great on that lovely PSP screen!

G>P: If *Ford Street Racing* does well on PSP can we expect a sequel?
BW: Well... we're obviously putting ideas together for our next title and it wouldn't be giving too much away to say that this would involve some sort of team racing! However this would not be a direct sequel to *Ford Street Racing*, as we'd like to move in a slightly different direction.

More bloody and brutal than Unchained Melody

MORTAL KOMBAT: UNCHAINED

OUT: **OCT '06**

Publisher **Midway** / Developer **In-house** / Players **1-2**

WHAT IS IT?

Being kind, we'd say this new entry to the series is a riff on PlayStation 2's *Mortal Kombat: Deception*. Being rude, this is just a port.

Everyone knows what *Mortal Kombat* is. Absolutely everyone. Even mothers cleaning little Johnny's room, who landed on these pages while half-heartedly flicking through this issue of *Go>Play* they found on the floor, even they know what it is (and don't look under the mattress, by the way). *Mortal Kombat* doesn't need explaining, so we won't bother.

What you want to know is what can *Mortal Kombat: Unchained* do for you? For starters it can scratch your itch for a fight, without making the PSP's fickle D-pad cry, as the forward-forward-back-style commands of the moves won't be too demanding. *Unchained* will be accessible and easy to play, so there's no worrying how much pain your left thumb will be in. True, the timing for *Unchained* is slightly off as it will be forced to trudge to shelves in the cindery wake of the trail-blazing *Tekken: Dark Resurrection*, but if anything it should be even easier to play. The moves are incredibly forgiving, the commands are extremely simple and there's no nervously shying around the D-pad's infamous fear of diagonals because there are very few diagonals in *Mortal Kombat* anyway. Besides, no matter how cute Lili might be in *Tekken*, you're not going to see her decapitate people and then skewer the heads as Baraka does. Some people like that sort of thing. Don't worry, mum, we're sure little Johnny isn't one of them.

As always, there's a token attempt by Midway to try and wriggle out of theatrical 'oh no, not another PS2 port' table thumping that *Unchained* is sure to provoke. So the Midway Song And Dance To Distract You From The Fact That This Is A PS2 Port™ comes in the form of new characters. Introducing stage left, with slightly blood-stained attire: Kitana, Blaze, Frost, Jax, Goro and Shao Khan. Kitana (hot ninja chick in tight purple outfit) and Jax (rubbish guy with metal arms) both starred in *Mortal Kombat II* and again, everyone knows who they are. Blaze was one of the two characters fighting in the

> **We're mostly interested in multi-player Puzzle Kombat**

EXPRESS CHECKOUT
- 30 playable characters
- New Endurance mode
- Puzzle Kombat
- Wi-Fi multi-player
- PUZZLE KOMBAT

background of the 'spike pit' level in *Mortal Kombat II*. Given that one of those characters is on fire, you can guess which one was Blaze. Frost was a disciple of Sub-Zero turned traitor while Goro and Shao Khan have been *Mortal Kombat* bosses in the past. If you were one of the three people in the UK to have owned a GameCube and played *Mortal Kombat: Deception* on Nintendo's dinky console, you'll have already seen Goro and Shao Khan strutting their 3D look on that, knocking the list of truly new characters for *Unchained* down to a not-so-impressive four. They're all unlocked from the start though, so that's a welcome bonus. Also new is Endurance mode, which will presumably take the form of the classic 'beat your opponents until you run out of energy/you run out of battery juice/your train arrives at Waterloo'.

What we don't yet know is if the gameplay will be tightened up to address the bugs and glitches found in *Deception*, such as the Darrius combo that did 49 per cent damage and Kobra's overpowered combos. *Go>Play*'s great Predict-O-Meter says 'probably not', showing off the decisiveness that makes it such a great machine to rely upon for these things. But no matter. *Unchained* has Puzzle Kombat. For those who don't know, Puzzle Kombat is essentially a *Mortal Kombat*-themed take on Capcom's *Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo*. That was a brilliant puzzle, and so by association Puzzle Kombat is brilliant too. Multi-player *Mortal Kombat* will be good, but we're mostly interested in multi-player Puzzle Kombat. We're not going to say that it's a better mini-game than Tekken Bowl because Puzzle Kombat is above and beyond the mere label of mini-game. It's that good.

A handful of new characters and an Endurance mode do not a new game make, so *Unchained* will struggle to dodge the 'PS2 port' tag. However, 'PS2 port' tag does not a bad game make, and the fact remains that *Unchained* is based on a solid beat-'em-up and is undergoing a further nip and tuck to look even sexier than it did. Is this *Tekken*'s fatality? ■

Ryan King

WE SAY **Puzzle Kombat! On your PSP! And a sexed up *Mortal Kombat: Deception* with new characters and a new Endurance mode. But Puzzle Kombat... we genuinely can't wait.**

When the chips are down, it's time to call Howard for some tips

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP POKER 2

OUT: OCT '06

Publisher **Oxygen** / Developer **Point Of View** / Players **1-8**

WHAT IS IT?

The most popular poker title in the states. Featuring a handful of top players, including Howard Lederer and a whole bunch of other people you've never heard of.

EXPRESS CHECKOUT

- Features seven poker stars
- Has a unique bluff system to help you in your dry spells
- Compatible with PS2
- 14 different types of poker

More is usually better. There are exceptions – the magazine *More*, for example – but for the most part, more *is* better. Sometimes what we're offered in sequels is actually less. Less innovation, less interest and less effort from all concerned. That's why we were so glad when preview code of Oxygen's new poker title hit our desk: there's so much more.

More stars, including the great Howard 'I've never heard of you' Lederer, Annie 'I've never heard of you' Duke and Paul 'I've never heard of you' Darden. Wow, that's loads more than last time. While we've never played these people at poker before, they have their very own styles, and from what we've played so far there's great variation in the way your opponents play.

Indeed, some of the less well-known characters appear to be completely mad, betting silly amounts on ridiculous hands. Many of the characters have tells, giving you insight into their hand, and the taunts can be great fun in multi-player.

[A clear chip leader in the high-stakes game of poker titles]

There's more customisation as well, with a bizarre but intriguing RPG skill system that allows you to bolster your innate poker skills with cool attributes like 'stare down', 'stone face' and 'keen eyes'. With the full range of skills adding elements to the game with enjoyable regularity, you're unlikely to get bored of the main Single-player mode quickly, but if you do, this PSP version can not only link up for eight-player PSP fun, but can also be used to join an online PlayStation 2 hand or two.

The main thing, is that there's so much more poker. Incorporating not just the standard five-card Stud and Texas Hold-'Em, *World Championship Poker* features 14 varieties of your favourite card game like Crazy Pineapple (along with old-fashioned regular Pineapple, of course), Tahoe, Super Eight and Razz 2 to 7. We didn't have a clue either when we started, but this wide range of games makes *World Championship Poker 2* a clear chip leader in the high-stakes game of console poker titles. ■ **Tom Leclerc**

WE SAY **Undoubtedly the best poker game on PSP, and a significant improvement on the original. Gamblers, get your wallets ready.**

Why not try Crazy Pineapple? It'll make you crazy... like a fox

Never bring out the cards at an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting

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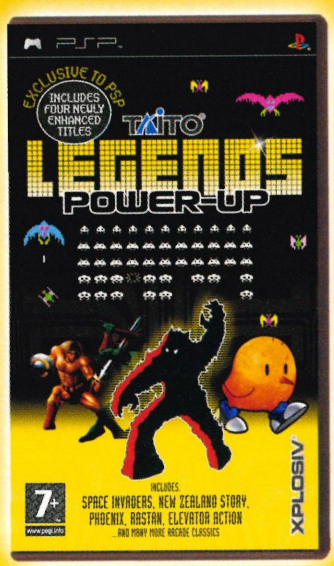

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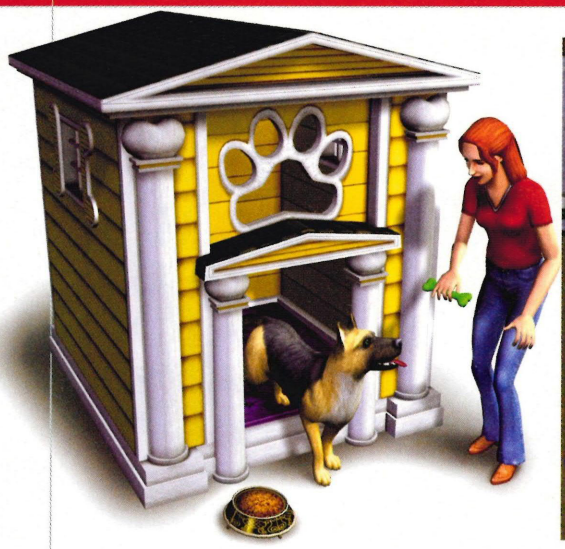


"Dogs and cats living together – mass hysteria"

THE SIMS 2 PETS

OUT: Q4 '06

Publisher **Electronic Arts** / Developer **In-house** / Players **1**

WHAT IS IT?

Put simply, these are virtual pets for virtual people. We really do live in a world drunk on the endless possibilities of computer technology.

EXPRESS CHECKOUT

- Teach 'em tricks
- At least four species
- Create unique pets
- Take pets to the park
- Dress your animals up

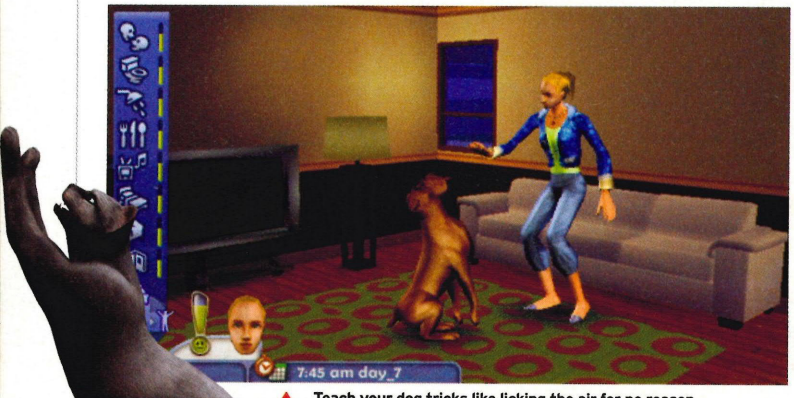
Electronic Arts' relentless onslaught of *The Sims* games continues with *The Sims 2 Pets*, a PSP game that's sure to please those who've been jealously eyeing up *Nintendogs* on DS. Where that title only allowed you to tickle a few dogs till boredom set in, *Pets* goes the whole 'hog'. Confirmed animal choices include dogs, cats, birds and guinea pigs. Our fingers are still crossed for llamas (or perhaps goats), but we won't be holding our breath.

This being a *Sims* game, the focus won't be entirely on the animals, but rather on how they interact with your little computer folk. *The Sims* are of course responsible for the lives of their pets but, as in real life, the process works both ways and the creatures will exert a positive or negative effect on their owners depending on how they are treated. Leave a dog unattended for too long, and the Sim will return to find that young Bowser has left them a rather smelly gift.

As well as all the ups and downs that a real pet would provide, *The Sims 2 Pets* offers a number of possibilities only achievable in the wonderful world of videogames. Chief among these possibilities is the Create-A-Pet feature. This will allow players to fully customise their pet from its appearance right down to its personality. Players could recreate the look of their real-life pets or simply try to create the ugliest animal of all time. EA also promises that we'll be able to, "create and control digital characters over a lifetime", suggesting that, unlike *Nintendogs*, it may be possible for the pets to actually die. This is sure to cause plenty of heartache in both the sim and the player after years of looking after their mutual best friend. You can probably expect a few 'Dead Parrot' jokes in the eventual *Go>Play* review too. ■ **Ashley Day**

[Unlike Nintendogs, it may be possible for pets to actually die]

WE SAY **We know this'll sell like crazy anyway, but we'd like EA to fill the game with an endless supply of different pets. Hamsters, snakes, monkeys, hippos... we want 'em all.**



Teach your dog tricks like licking the air for no reason.

At some point we've all wished we could customise our own tail. Right?

Metal Slug 4 is considered the worst in the series, but it's still ace in comparison to other games

1 Disc ÷ 6 Metal Slugs = Handheld Heaven

METAL SLUG ANTHOLOGY

OUT: Q3 '06

Publisher **Ignition** / Developer **SNK** / Players **1-2**

WHAT IS IT?

Six of the best run-and-gun games of all time. *Metal Slug* features insane shooting action in tanks, planes, submarines and even on camels.

EXPRESS CHECKOUT

- Six arcade-perfect conversions
- Wi-Fi multi-player
- Hidden extras
- Tanks, subs, planes and camels
- Widescreen and full-screen modes

Expect to see plenty of huge bosses like this one from *Metal Slug X*

SNK will have to make a cock-up of epic proportions to get this one wrong. Take six of the greatest 2D shooters from the Neo Geo (*Metal Slug 1-5* plus *Metal Slug X*) then bang them onto one PSP disc and we might as well weld the disc tray shut as there's little chance of anything else getting anywhere near our PSPs for a very long time. The original arcade *Metal Slug* is, quite simply, one of the best games of all time. It's a side-scrolling 2D shooter, in which players may make use of weaponry like shotguns and rocket launchers and even a tank (the titular Metal Slug) that oddly defies the laws of physics by being able to jump around. The series is well loved among fans for its exquisite animation, its wealth of secrets and old-school gameplay.

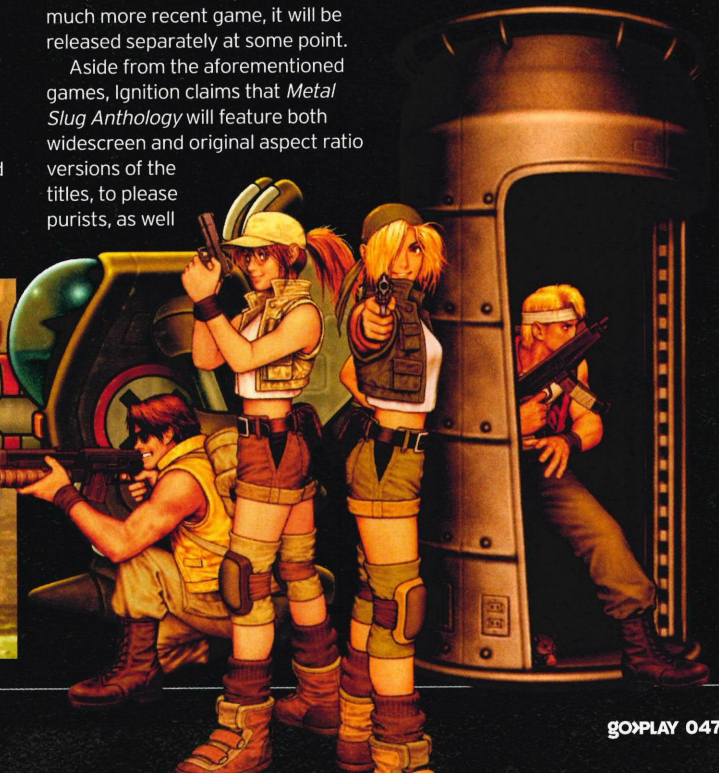
Metal Slug is, quite simply, one of the best games of all time

While several parts of the *Metal Slug* series have been released in the UK on PSOne and PS2, the original game and its sequel were only ever released in Japan years ago, and now fetch high prices under the online hammer. Playing the games at home was always a real chore - pay through the nose for the game, find a console that plays it and locate an NTSC-compatible TV - so we're especially relieved to finally be able to pick up almost every game for a fraction of the original cost. It would have been even better to see *Metal Slug 6* on here, but then we suspect that, as a much more recent game, it will be released separately at some point.

Aside from the aforementioned games, Ignition claims that *Metal Slug Anthology* will feature both widescreen and original aspect ratio versions of the titles, to please purists, as well as an ad-hoc Multi-player mode and several secret unlockables. Our fingers are crossed that SNK has managed to fit in the fantastic *Metal Slug First Mission* and *Second Mission* from the Neo Geo Pocket, although we must admit that even without those extras *Metal Slug Anthology* is looking damn exciting. Having so many *Slug* games on one disc will make for yet another high value retro package and one that can't come soon enough. ■

Ashley Day

WE SAY **We've been dreaming of a *Metal Slug* collection for years and now it's finally on the way. If we lived near SNK, we'd find them and give 'em a big, manly hug.**



What would a Sega collection be without this little blue critter?

Altered Beast was always a bit naff, but it was the first ever MD game

Ash wants to name all his kids after *Golden Axe* characters, which is why he shouldn't breed

Sega gives you the Drive of your life

MEGA DRIVE COLLECTION

OUT: DEC '06

Publisher **Sega** / Developer **Backbone Entertainment** / Players **1-2**

WHAT IS IT?

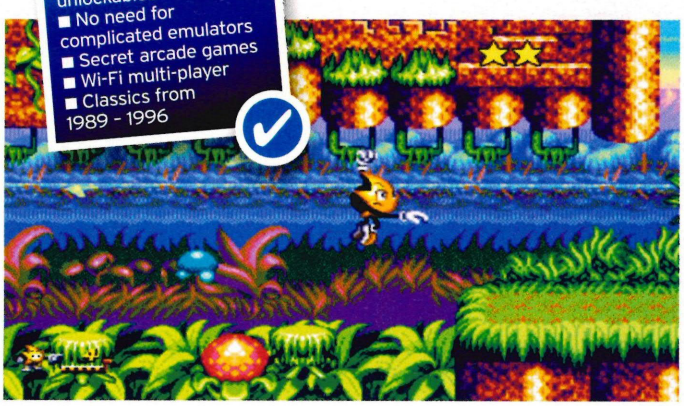
A handful of classic Mega Drive games bundled together on one little disc. This kind of thing would never have happened in the Dreamcast's heyday, you lucky people.

Announced for the American market but so far (at the time of writing) unconfirmed for European hands, Sega's *Mega Drive Collection* – or *Genesis Collection* as it'll be known in the states – is yet another retro compilation for the handheld that's now host to as many old-school classics as it is identikit driving games.

The smartest readers out there will have figured out that this compilation will feature Mega Drive releases (there's a none-too-cryptic clue in the title after all) so let's get down to business and have a look at the actual games. So far, we know that there will be 28 games plus some hidden ones. Titles that will definitely be included are: *Sonic The Hedgehog* (of course), *Altered Beast*, *Shinobi III*, the *Golden Axe* trilogy, *Ristar* and *Phantasy Star*. The collection is also set to feature a wealth of unlockable extras including interviews with the games' original developers, a museum of interesting factoids and a hints-and-tips area. Sega also promises that the disc will include "Sega arcade games from the Genesis era". Although such vague promises offer no real clue as to what kind of arcade games we can expect, the fact that the Genesis lasted from 1989 to around 1996 means that we could see some great arcade games in the package as this was the period when Sega's arcade technology branched off into three dimensions. If we can get perfect portable conversions of *Sega Rally* or *Virtual On* then this could well be a killer collection.

EXPRESS CHECKOUT

- 28 games plus unlockables
- No need for complicated emulators
- Secret arcade games
- Wi-Fi multi-player
- Classics from 1989 - 1996



[This could be one of the best retro collections on PSP]

Add in the obvious but incredibly worthwhile wireless Multi-player mode and *Mega Drive Collection* could well turn out to be one of the best retro collections on the PSP. That is, if Sega takes our advice: give us the *Streets Of Rage* trilogy, complete with a Wi-Fi two-player option and we'll be over the moon. In fact, we're confident that with the greatest scrolling fighter (yes it is, don't argue) included, *Mega Drive Collection* will sell itself. ■

Ashley Day

WE SAY ***Mega Drive Collection*** **could be one of PlayStation Portable's best retro compilations if Sega gets all of the fan favourites and obscure rarities on there too.**

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Talking with TalkMan: Speaking Of Innovation

By Dexter Pearson

WILL TALKMAN REALLY HELP YOU ASK THE LOCALS WHERE THE NEAREST DRINKING ESTABLISHMENT IS? WE PUT IT TO THE TEST AND EXAMINE OTHER INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS THAT AIM TO IMPROVE OUR GAMING EXPERIENCE...

The *TalkMan* parrot is called Max, which is a strange name for a bird.

Packing your suitcase to go to Portugal with only a day's notice isn't my idea of fun, but if you want a good deal on accommodation as well as a cheap flight, you're best off leaving it right until the last minute. And that's what we did. Me and the tribe - as I like to call my parents and three younger sisters - running around like headless chickens, cramming the essentials into suitcases. By 'essentials' I mean the usual: towels, shorts, sun cream, eggs. That's right, ladies and gents, eggs. In a suitcase. You'd have thought sister number one would have known better than to wrap my brand new pink shirt around a box of a dozen raw eggs, and I'm sure I don't need to give you any clues as to what I discovered when I opened my case upon arrival: a yolky shirt which became the first thing to be thrown away that holiday. Needless to say we didn't have the British delicacy that is eggy bread and tomato sauce when we got to our villa in Portugal that night.

Were it not for my trusty PSP I might have had a boring journey. The airhostesses on the afternoon flight were nothing worth writing home about while the meals were sub-par at best. Prior to boarding, I nipped into the duty free electrical shop and picked up *TalkMan*, the revolutionary new language translator for PSP, that comes with a small microphone attachment. I thought that all you had to do was talk into *TalkMan*, then watch a blue parrot translate and output your sentence in one of the five other languages on offer - but, as I'll come to later, it's not quite that simple. The European version of *TalkMan* comes with support for English, Italian, Spanish, German, French and Japanese. Apparently there's another European version that supports Chinese instead of Japanese. I'm not about to travel across the globe to see where my iPod was assembled though, nor am I planning to get over to Japan for the release of PS3 - so neither of these languages are much use to me anyway.

It actually dawned on me while eating one of the in-flight snacks, that *TalkMan* doesn't support Portuguese, and seeing as I was heading to Portugal, I was a little disappointed that my trusty translating parrot was too lazy to listen during his Portuguese lessons. With Portugal being next door to Spain however, most people that live in the planes of the Portuguese sunshine actually

speak Spanish anyway although I was soon to find out the hard way that the Portuguese actually hate it when tourists speak Spanish to them. Just imagine the look on their faces when I got my PSP to speak Spanish – but that's another story for another time. Fortunately, half of our holiday would be spent with good friends in Spain where *TalkMan* would surely come into its own.

Back at the villa then, as my siblings squabbled, and as I watched the yolk drip from my pink shirt which had been salvaged and hung up on the clothesline without my consent, I was deep in thought. Having just been the first meal of the mosquito that would haunt us for the first few days in Portugal, I wasn't the happiest PSP owner that night, but sitting by the pool under a clear night's sky, I started to think about innovation. *TalkMan* is innovative, and although I was yet to use it properly, I knew that applications like this often have a big impact upon a console or handheld.

Just look at *SingStar* for PS2. It's suddenly become common practise for the karaoke party game to emerge for any big bash, be it Bonfire Night, Christmas, birthdays, Bank Holidays, Sundays, Saturdays, Fridays – hell, any excuse for a party and out comes *SingStar*. Whether the crowd gets up together and sings *Suspicious Minds* or *Come On Eileen* or a courageous individual who thinks they can really sing gets up and tries to outdo Bonnie Tyler with *Total Eclipse Of The Heart*, *SingStar* gets the ball rolling, breaks the ice, and almost forces people to let their hair down and have a ruddy good time.

[TalkMan doesn't work quite how I expected; it's not as simple as I was led to believe]

Guitar Hero does the same. Its charm lies in the controller; people can't help but pick up this Gibson replica and start jamming along to Queen. And look at *Buzz!* – it's not old by any means, not as old as *SingStar* and the EyeToy at least, but it hasn't taken long for a glorified quiz game to take off and become a phenomenon. Pub quizzes will never be the same. Wouldn't it be fantastic for *Buzz!* to make an appearance on PSP though? Support for six people, maybe more, and it could work in a similar way to that *Poker Face* game show on TV recently – you know your own score but you don't know if your opponents are ahead of you or not. If you think you're the lowest-scoring opponent at the end of each round, you can either fold or get somebody else to fold by trash talking them down before the actual boot off. You'd be sitting right next to your friends, being all flamboyant and saying that you've done better than them (even though you have your doubts), bluffing your way to victory – it would be perfect. Innovation, where would we be without you?

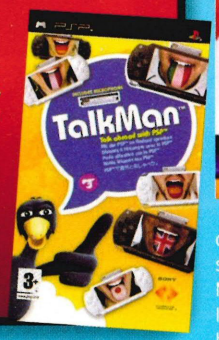
Anyway, I digress. *TalkMan* doesn't work quite how I expected. It's not as simple as I was led to believe, so you can't just talk into the microphone and have it translate on the fly. It seemed to have no support for the Yorkshire accent that I'm cursed with either, so I had to talk in a rather generic voice so that Max the *TalkMan* parrot (who sounds ›

You'll be congratulating Italians on their World Cup win in no time

It's good to TalkMan

Chit chat

I got quite a lot of opinions about *TalkMan* for this feature. My Spanish-speaking friend confirmed that everything the parrot had to say was correct – it just didn't say enough for her liking. Videogame retailers said they hadn't sold many, but that it was a great idea all the same – and a very friendly pool attendant who spoke both languages told me that he'd never quite seen anything like it – and that was indeed a good thing.



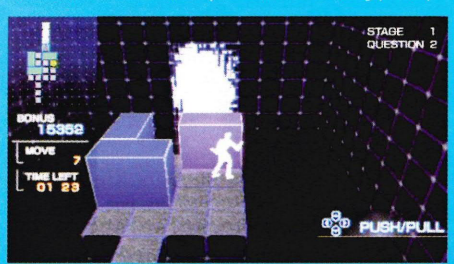
like he comes straight from Essex) could understand me. Anyway, when using *TalkMan* the process is as follows: first you must select a scene from the menu. Some examples include skiing, dining at a restaurant, meeting people, and there are even situations in there that cover things like dating, so if you fancy enduring frogs' legs and wine for lunch in France with a bird who speaks the language of love, then *TalkMan* has your back covered – for a while at least.

Once you've selected a scene, the Parrot appears in front of a backdrop with a theme matching the scene – so if you chose shopping, expect to see Max in front of trolleys packed with items, or if you chose eating you'll see his parrot friends sitting behind him, eating their meal. Of course, these fancy backdrops come at the expense of a load time, but fortunately these are minimal, so you can be talking pretty quickly when you need to. From the selected scene, you then go on to ask *TalkMan* a phrase. Max didn't quite understand what I meant when I said, "Excuse me, can you show me where the baby lotion is please?" He clearly didn't have in mind what I had in mind.

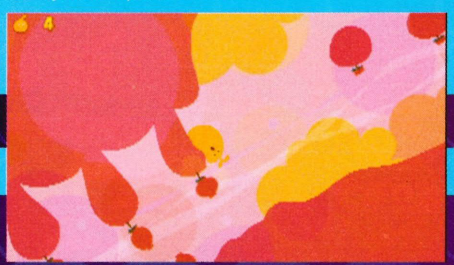
On the crossover from Portugal to Spain, I went back into thinking mode – I'm dangerous when I think – and I started to ponder what titles were available for PSP that offered some degree of innovation, something unique. My mind jumped right to *PQ: Practical Intelligence Quotient* which puts you up against a series of increasingly mind-bending puzzles to test your grey matter to the limit. Then there's *LocoRoco*, Sony's PSP title of the summer which offers excellent playability with its unique, quirky, colourful, miscible blobs that roll from corner to corner and bounce from wall to wall. It's addictive, it's fresh and it's just what the PSP needs to appeal to a wider audience who aren't generally gamers. You might think that the PSP is aimed at the older crowd, the people with hair on their face – both men and woman – but believe it or not, I know more adolescents with PSPs than people my own age. Of course, I'm not complaining – I beat them at *WipEout Pure* every time.

Continuing with that theme of innovation, *Metal Gear Acid 2* has a special set of 3D-vision goggles that fit onto the front of the PSP, and using these goggles you can view superb 3D effects and watch FMV cut-scenes of unprecedented quality. Naturally, you'll get funny looks if you use them on the bus. Hell, they'd steal your Sony Ericsson without remorse if you were going to use those goggles on public transport. Away from thieves that lurk on buses, as an added bonus in the comfort of your front room you can also link up *Acid 2* and *Metal Gear Solid 3: Subsistence*, then import pictures from the PS2 game to view on your PSP in 3D vision. There are link-up features in other games too, such as importing and exporting team files between the two versions of *Pro Evolution Soccer 5*, and let's not forget about *WWE Smackdown! Vs RAW 2006* either; owning both the PSP and the PS2 versions allows you to unlock new characters and swap belts back and forth, as well as continuing your PS2 season on the go via your PSP. It's innovation like this that adds that little bit of extra value and appeal to gaming. *SOCOM: Fireteam Bravo* is another fine example of something unique on a handheld – proving highly popular on PS2,

> **It's innovation like this that adds that little bit of extra value and appeal to gaming**



PQ: Practical Intelligence Quotient **will test your brain power or lack thereof**



LocoRoco **doesn't teach you anything, but it is one of the more innovative titles out there**

The world of *Metal Gear Acid 2* comes alive when you peer through the goggles

Chat to your comrades in *SOCOM* with the handy add-on that is the headset

Perhaps we should get Magpie and the *TalkMan* parrot together, something awesome is bound to happen

the PSP version supports a tremendous Online mode and, thanks to the bundled headset, you can talk to your team-mates online too.

After all that heavy-duty thinking, I suddenly felt the need for some tomb raiding, and after half an hour of solving the greatest puzzle of all – working the camera angle to try and get a close up of Lara's mighty fine backside – we arrived at our second destination. Ah, Spain, the land of senoritas, luscious beaches, gorgeous weather and a fast food rule to die for – you can have a beer with your McDonalds. Still, there remained one thing preventing me from chatting up the senoritas and ordering a beer with my Grande Mac – and that was the language barrier.

This is where I used *TalkMan* properly for the first time. We had just arrived in Puerto Banus, the place where millionaires from all corners of the globe hang out on their flashy yachts. The nightlife there is fantastic – people dining by the harbour, the aroma of exquisite food drifting through the warm air, mingling with the sound of laughter and multi-lingual chatter. Clutching my local tourist guide, looking for places just like Puerto Banus, I approached a Spaniard to ask where I could find this highly acclaimed millionaires' harbour. He was a man, I was a man, and I made sure that Max knew he was a man because my Essex parrot needs to know as male and female verbs are different. With *TalkMan* in one hand and the tourist guide in the other, I selected the Sightseeing scene on the PSP and said into the microphone, "Where can I find this?"

My jaw dropped as Max the parrot came up with four different phrases along the lines of what I just said, and these would doubtlessly come in handy given the scene I had selected – although the phrase that asks where I can buy gifts is probably a waste of time in Spain as you cannot move for gift shops. Dumbfounded by the talent of *TalkMan*, I selected exactly what I wanted to say in the first place – "Where can I find this?" After selecting my phrase, I had the option of selecting a supporting sentence: in this case, "Could you show me on the map?" To have the PSP say this phrase and the supporting sentence would be wrong as I didn't have a map, just a tourist guide with pretty pictures. I wanted this guy to point me in the right direction, and that's exactly what he did.

If he didn't hear *TalkMan* ask, "¿Donde puedo encontrar esto?" he could surely read it on the screen. I held *TalkMan* close to his face, so he could hear it and read it if he so wished, and after he had come to terms with this 21st Century technology, the Spaniard, who was clearly a fisherman, started talking to me in Spanish. Uh-oh! *TalkMan*, in this scene, didn't actually give me an option for this guy to answer back. I think my Essex parrot expected a simple point of the finger, but on this occasion he was wrong. However, after a short period of listening to this Spanish fisherman babble on in his native tongue, gesticulating wildly, he obviously realised that I didn't have a clue what he was talking about. So, to make things a little simpler, he beckoned for me to follow him to the end of the sunlit street. It's amazing, I wouldn't follow anybody in my own country if they asked me to – yet in a foreign country it's perfectly normal. Putting my trust in the fisherman paid off because at the end of this street was a sign that pointed to the Puerto Banus harbour. It actually worked!

[The Spaniard, who was clearly a fisherman, started talking to me in Spanish. Uh-oh!]

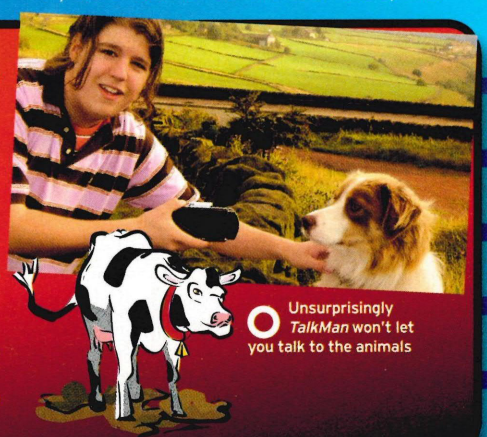
After a short walk I found yachts to rival Jack Sparrow's galleon, and there were boats scattered across the water as far as the eye could see, while a seemingly endless procession of restaurants greeted me on land. As I walked through this area of posh eateries and expensive aqua travel, I looked at a few scenes on *TalkMan*. I figured it was time to try out a little humour and see if the Spanish ›

Now you can get tickets from touts in whatever country England happen to be playing in

Language games

Breaking down barriers

TalkMan isn't much use back in England, especially in my homeland of Yorkshire. Dogs don't understand parrots, neither do cows, and I couldn't get close enough to a sheep to be able to tell. They seem scared of me for some reason. The only things that you might find useful on *TalkMan* are the language games, which mostly teach you how to pronounce words. Presumably, you'd use these teaching games so that next time you go on holiday, you won't have to rely on *TalkMan* as much. Cut that bird a break!

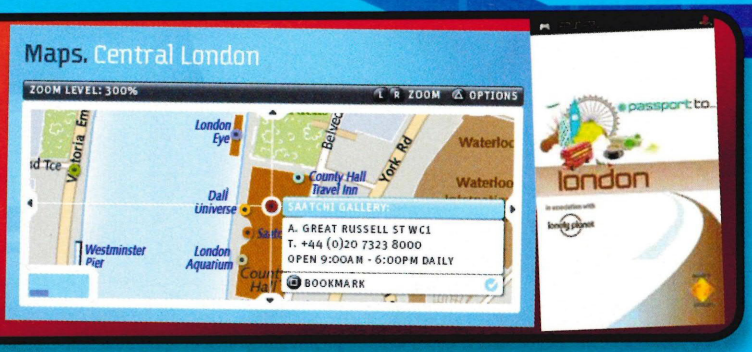


Unsurprisingly *TalkMan* won't let you talk to the animals

No PlayStation like home

Find you way around the big city

The end of September sees the release of *Passport To... London*, a PSP utility that gives you a guide to our wonderful capital city. A guide to London won't be useful to people who already live there, so it's a good job that this planned *Passport* series will come in many different city flavours – Paris, Rome, Prague, Barcelona, even Amsterdam, although I bet they neglect to give an insight into the seedier side of that particular city.

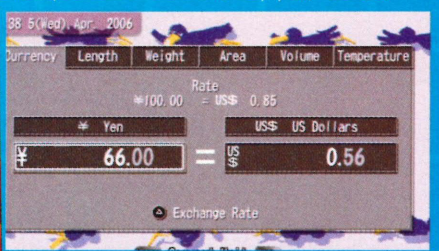


would succumb to a bit of good old British comedy. I selected the Money scene, then asked *TalkMan*, "How much is this?" Surprisingly, he come up with, "How much?" which was close enough for me to pull off my little joke. Approaching a tanned, mousey looking guy who appeared to be servicing a large, white and yellow speedboat, I pointed to it and told *TalkMan* to ask, "How much?" The reaction I got was just a puzzled look. This was the joke – obviously the boat wasn't for sale, but I didn't know if this man's confusion came from that fact, or if *TalkMan* itself confused him. I asked my parrot to repeat himself, and brought the PSP closer to his face. After reading in Spanish what *TalkMan* was trying to say out loud to the puzzled skipper, he let out a small chuckle and again started to talk in Spanish. I'd imagine in his ramblings, he was trying to stress that the boat wasn't for sale – either that or he was making me an offer – but I decided that the best course of action here was to say, "Gracias," and walk off. So that's what I did.

My adventures with *TalkMan* continued: from ordering food at the restaurant only to find out that the waiter spoke fluent English, to renting a beach chair and getting tremendously ripped off, I had a lot of success with my little parrot friend. Sure, there were times when the person I was trying to talk to just walked off, and there were other times when I had totally miscalculated the situation and had to ask *TalkMan* for another phrase before moving the conversation on, but when embarrassment didn't occur, and people didn't walk off, communicating with foreigners had never been so much fun.

> **Looking down the list, she couldn't really find an answer polite enough to say no**

Toward the end of the holiday, I plucked up the courage to talk to a senorita working in a little coffee bar. She was quite hot, nicely tanned and she didn't speak my language – the perfect way to end my holiday with a bang! "What's your name?" *TalkMan* asked. I hoped she wouldn't reply Esmeralda, despite being a Spanish name it sounds so Transylvanian. I vant to suck your blood, and so on. "Nina," she replied. By this time I had already loaded up my next phrase, "Do you live here?" Immediately after I asked this, I pressed the 'Ask for an answer' button on my *TalkMan*. My parrot asked her to select from the list of potential answers. She laughed and scrolled down to 'Si' – even I knew what that meant. Without really thinking about the consequences should she say yes, I asked,



TalkMan has loads of conversion tools that will help you find out how much stuff actually costs

Keep getting low marks and Max will begin to despair at your ineptitude

The microphone in all its glory, lovely isn't it?

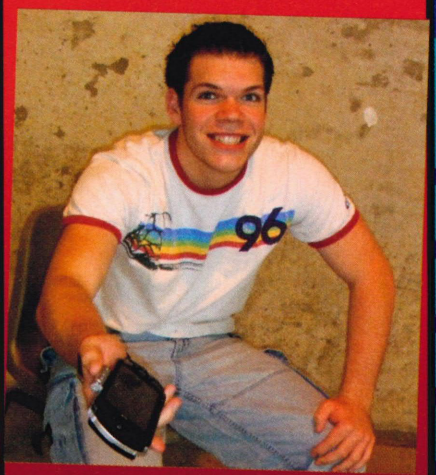
"Are you free tomorrow?" and again, asked *TalkMan* to get me an answer. I passed my PSP over to her so she could peruse the list of answers. "No," she replied. I think she was growing impatient waiting for my order, my preference of coffee. I just ordered Mocha. When she returned with my tiny coffee, I clutched at straws and asked, "Would you like to have a cup of coffee with me?" and I offered my PSP to her again for an answer. Looking down the list, she couldn't really find an answer polite enough to say no. Instead she passed the PSP back and pointed to her boss, who was a man in his 60s, telling me that she couldn't, in her language, not mine. But I understood her and took comfort in the fact that *TalkMan* actually did initiate some conversation, so my test was complete and the result was a definite success.

The end of the holiday came quickly and I soon found myself tucked up in a more comfortable bed back home. Morning came, along with the bad weather. I'd had fun on my travels though: my reflections on innovation, my conversations with foreigners, and some handheld gaming to get me through the airborne travel. As I unpacked my bags, I found something that took me right back to that first day of the holiday - I found my pink shirt, complete with dried on yolk. I'll never forget that first strange incident of the holiday, simply because it stood out - just like releases such as *TalkMan* stand out on PSP. Games like *Ridge Racer* and *Dead To Rights* blend into the background of the PSP catalogue just like an unsoiled shirt makes its way out of the case and into the washer without a second thought. There are some things worth remembering though, like a brand new garment dripping with egg or games and applications that offer something a little bit more than the rest. Memories are important, making memories is even more important, and while you might think that innovation is just another word for groundbreaking, I think the true definition of innovation is something that you will never, ever forget. ■

Safety first

Crimestoppers

Here's a little food for thought. While handing your PSP over to a foreigner for them to select a response - like I did with that senorita I almost pulled - be sure you can trust them, or that they can't make a quick getaway. You might laugh, but there are some untrustworthy people out there, like the ones who sell replica Rayban glasses for a fiver out of a cloth bag. If you hand them an expensive gadget, are they really going to select an answer - or will they just take the opportunity and run?



Not all people will be so willing to hand your PSP back to you - thieving sods

REVIEWED

WE PLAY 'EM, WE RATE 'EM, YOU

HIGHLIGHTS

"We took our **umpteenth first-place victory** and began to realise we'd done all this before."

Is *Ridge Racer 2* really **worth picking up** if you've already got the original in your collection? Turn to **page 58** to find out.

"The **emulation is perfect** and several games are especially good fun."

Taito Legends Power-Up provides some great **retro action** with it's selection of classics. Get over to **page 65** to find out if there's something in it for you.

"For under the price of a **Lego Falcon** you can fly the beast and also use **every single character.**"

The original trilogy gets the **Lego treatment.** See if it's one with the Force or the Dark Side on **page 66.**

1 Dave used a comb once but his hair retreated back inside his head in shock. Now he walks around with permanent bed-head.

2 We took another picture of Dave with his eyes open but it just didn't compare. Suffice to say he begged us to use that one. No chance, how are we suposed to mock that?

3 Dave models himself on Seth from Emmerdale and hopes that one day his sideburns might be just as impressive as those mighty lamb chops.

4 Dave reckons he was distracted by 'a light' when we took the photo. It was the flash, Dave, not bloody witchcraft.

5 The traditional two-gun Go>Play salute is almost there but Dave forgot to give his guns barrels. We guess that means he's shooting blanks or something.

6 Dave reckons he owns over 20 football shirts and wears one every day. He only supports Stoke City though, which is weird. He doesn't think it is though, which is weirder.

REVIEWER OF THE MONTH

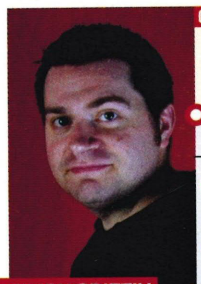
(As picked by us, out of a Tauntaun)

REVIEWER: Dave Shaw

SUBJECT: Shaw Thing

CHAMP OR CHUMP?

So, what exactly have the hard-working, hot-to-trot Go>Play crew been up to this month? We ask them directly...



SIMON GRIFFIN

CHAMP

21 August Went to lunch with Rockstar and had a lovely bit of lamb. Mmm, lamb.

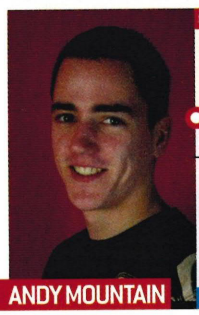
24 August My new 32" LCD turned up. HD gaming here I come!

26 August Filmed more scenes for my mate's zombie film, so much for one weekend!

18 August Landlord decided to fit a nice new kitchen in my flat. Mmm, chrome.

28 August Can't remember what I did on the Bank Holiday, must have been rubbish. It probably rained.

CHUMP



ANDY MOUNTAIN

CHAMP

4 August Celebrated a friend's birthday with a party down the pub. Cake, sweets and beer – not a good combination. Still a good night though.

25 August Watersports, BBQ and drink. A great way to spend an afternoon off work.

27 August Fondue and poker seemed to be the preffered way to celebrate a friends 22nd. Plenty of burnt mouths didn't agree.

19 August Went to a mate's engagement party. Celebrated in the traditional way of getting drunk to the point that the speech sounded good.

12-20 August Had a week off work to do some watersports. British weather allowed me a full seven hours on the water.

CHUMP

HENRI ROWLATT

CHAMP

18 August Went to the Secret Garden Party festival. There were loads of tea houses, I went down a muddy hill in a wheelchair and stayed up all night listening to quiet bands. Bizarre but fantastic!

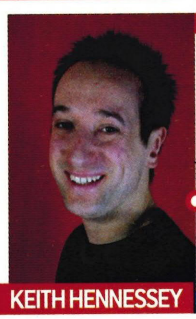
31 August Found out that I had to move out of my house in less than two weeks. My landlady previously said I would be chucked out at the beginning of October...total nightmare!

3 August My parents came down to visit my Bournemouth pad. We drank wine, ate food and sucked up the sea air. Champion.

26 August Ate loads of vegan cheese. It's not proper cheese you know.

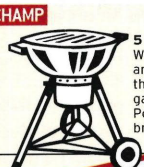
23 August Scored last-minute tickets to the Reading festival, got myself ready for a weekend of rock, sweat and booze!

CHUMP



KEITH HENNESSEY

CHAMP



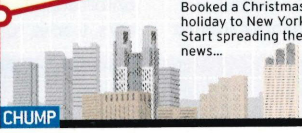
5 August Went to a BBQ and discovered the near lethal game of Beer Pong... ouch my brain

19 August Premiership kicked off and I saw my Fantasy League team skyrocket to the top. Yes!

31 August Tevez and Mascherano sign for The Hammers, at last some justice.

25 August Went to the office summer party and got stung by a wasp- damn my honey glazed skin.

12 August Booked a Christmas holiday to New York. Start spreading the news...



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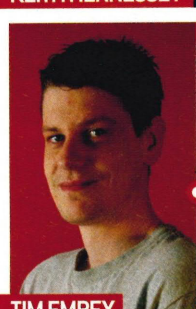


TIM EMPEY

CHAMP

5 August Thought I was dying again, but it turned out to be just tonsillitis! Took some time off work and ate ice cream.

6 August Bought *GTA: San Andreas* to pass the time while off sick, damn it's good.

31 August Still haven't completed *GTA: SA*, even though I've played it every day, damn it's big.

1 August Daytrip to France to see *Alone In The Dark* on PS3. Nearly died of the heat and a taxi-driving granny who kept hitting kerbs.

19 August Stayed in bed all day. I'm lazy like that.

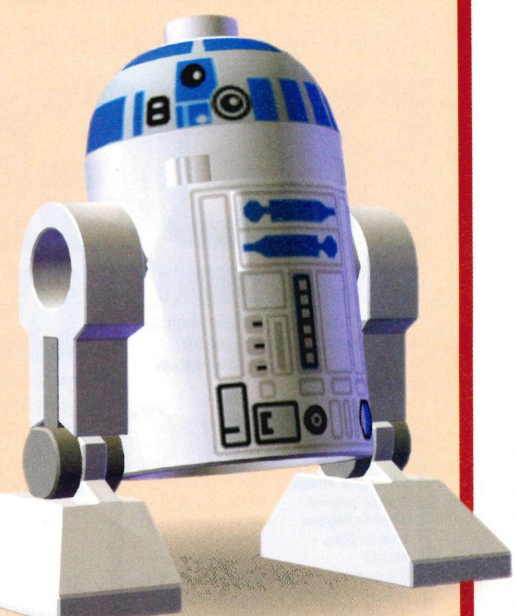
CHUMP

Reviewed this month

[58] RIDGE RACER 2
Namco has always provided a solid racing experience with the *Ridge* series. Is that the case with this latest sequel?

HIGHLIGHTS

[79] Ape Academy 2
[72] B-boy
[76] Blade Dancer: Lineage Of Light
[80] Every Extend Extra
[62] The Godfather Mob Wars
[66] Lego Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy
[74] Madden 07
[70] Mercury Meltdown
[64] Pilot Academy
[78] Pocket Racers
[69] Power Stone Collection
[75] Rengoku II: The Stairway To H.E.A.V.E.N.
[65] Taito Legends Power-Up



How we review

The Big Question

Even the fairest-minded reviewer makes assumptions. How good have the developer's other games been? How good are the games this is up against? We outline The Big Questions...

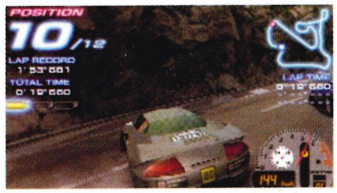
Percentage Score

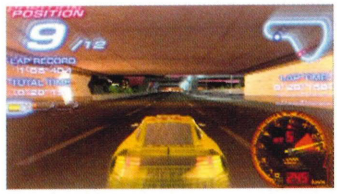
It's a games mag tradition to score out of 100 per cent, and who are we to break with tradition? Chances are you know how these work, but in case you don't:

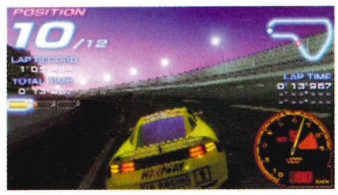
Under 30% = atrocious
Under 60% = pretty damn poor
Around 70% = now we're interested
Around 80% = well worth buying
Around 90% = fantastic – sell your gran to get it

Summing-Up Line

The whole game boiled down to 15 or so words.







"Slide away and give it all you've got"

RIDGE RACER 2

OUT: 13 OCT

Publisher **Sony** / Developer **Namco Bandai Games** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1-8** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN multi-player**

THE Big QUESTIONS

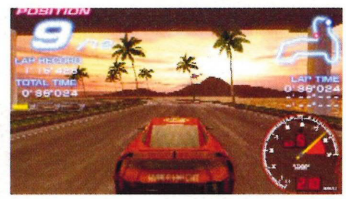
Finally a *Ridge Racer* sequel. This is bigger and better, right?
It's certainly bigger – your garage has grown to accommodate 62 cars, including eight new machines. There are nine new courses taking the total up to 21, as well as 12 new music tracks. The World Tour has been plumped with ten new tours and some extra multi-player modes have been added. Whether all this makes the experience 'better' is debatable.

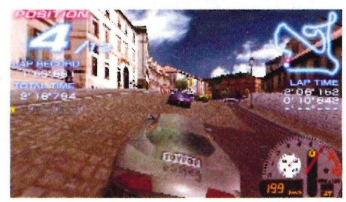
Multi-player matters to me. How about you?
Of course it does, and *Ridge Racer 2* comes packing two new multi-player modes to spice things up a little: Survival and Dual. They both have their own individual charms and don't seem to suffer from half as much lag as the multi-player in the original *RR* videogame.

We remember first getting behind the wheel of a car: that build up of nervous energy as we motored through our first few twists and turns, the excitement and thrill of mastering all the right moves and the sense of accomplishment at achieving complete control of the roaring metal steed we drove about in. But somewhere between then and now those feelings evaporated. We're not entirely sure when it happened or why, but somehow the thing that was once so exhilarating is now just a mundane action carried out without any real cognition. Why this journey down **Go>Play** memory lane? Well, unfortunately it mirrors the experience of playing *Ridge Racer 2*. The excitement when the review UMD unexpectedly turned up in the office, the joy of drifting our way around the first few tracks, but then the worrying sense of routine as we took our umpteenth first-place victory and began to realise we'd done all this before.

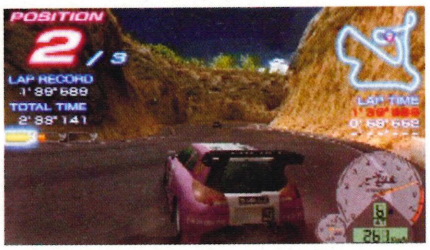
> We **were expecting** at least a form of **evolution**

We can almost hear the hushed expletives and dropped coffee cups from the *Ridge Racer* faithful on reading such remarks, so let us reassure you that developer Namco hasn't done anything too extreme to sully the good name of *Ridge Racer* on PSP, but at the same time it hasn't really done much to enhance it either. *Ridge Racer 2* is no less captivating, visually stunning or astoundingly smooth than the first game, but while it's 'no less' it's little more. Though few of us were expecting *Ridge Racer 2* to spark a racing revolution, we were expecting at least a form of evolution, but unfortunately it's not to be. New cars, tracks, tunes and game





Use nitrous at the wrong time and that precious advantage could be lost



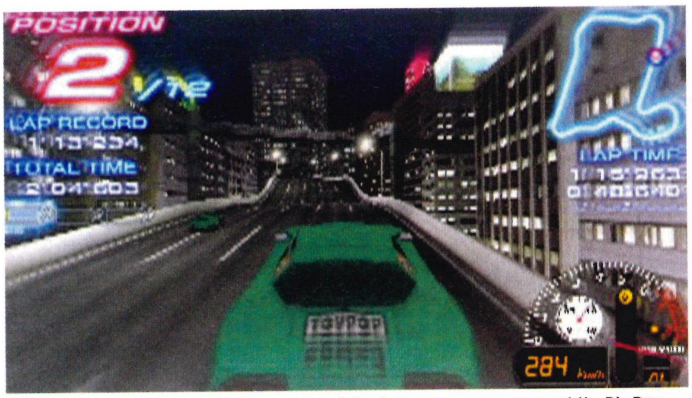
modes did much to rev our engines, however, it was soon quelled by a game that over the past few years has seen about as much technical advancement as the wheel.

Once again based on reworkings of previous *Ridge* and *Rave Racer* outings, *RR2* delivers classic and compelling drift-based racing where power slides and outlandish overtaking is key to success. With no tricking, pimping or gimping to suffer, this strips racing down to the bear minimum – it filters out the chaff and leaves you with an arcade experience like no other. Like the original, this game does an excellent job of showing off the PSP's technical prowess; few games have managed to make Sony's system look so impressive. Its unwavering frame-rate and slick presentation creates a sadistically satisfying sense of speed. Breathtaking sunsets, sweeping mountain ranges and glistening tarmac effects make every race a joy to behold. Set all this to some of the franchise's most vibrant electro-pop tunes and you have a true feast for the senses. Again, track designs are well thought out with plenty of looping corners designed to grind the most out of the ridiculously effective drift system which bears fruit in the form of handy nitrous boosts. Control in the game is tight and responsive; never over complicating things, you only ever need to use two buttons (accelerate and nitro) twinned with the drifting skills of the analogue nub or D-pad.

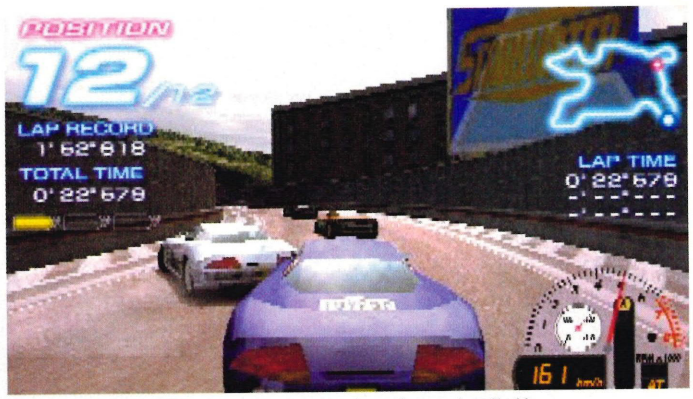
[As close to arcade racing perfection as you can get]

While this is encouraging at first, all of this praise could be (and quite rightly was) lavished upon the PSP's original *Ridge Racer* game; in fact these titles are about as close to arcade racing perfection as you can get. However, what has Namco done to ensure that the sequel not only lives up to, but also betters its predecessor? Disappointingly, not a great deal. It's fun – it's always been fun – but the inherent problems are still here. Shunting another driver still gives them a bigger boost than any nitrous, there's still no real sense of urgency during a race, AI drivers are still as slow as Jade Goody, and there's still plenty of

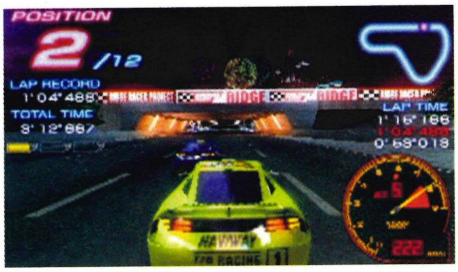
The thumping new tunes are enough to get every raver racing

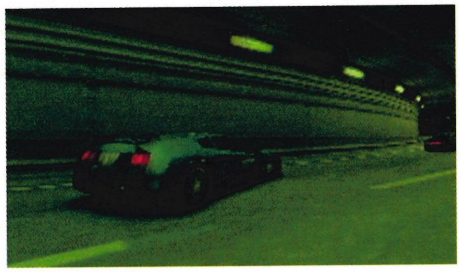


Certain cars come sporting the names of classic Namco games – we want the Dig Dug



Pit girl Reiko Nagasa returns for the sequel – yeah, we got excited too





handholding going on making for a fairly causal experience. Hoping for a greater challenge this time round, the developer has opted to keep the difficulty level the same, so once you've refreshed your power-sliding skills victory is surprisingly easy to come by. It's not until you reach the later stages of the World Tour mode that the speed and difficulty really begin to ramp up. For those not schooled in the world of *Ridge Racer*, the World Tour is the game's main Career mode and comprises an increasingly difficult series of races where you must win each event (or at least finish in a pre-determined position) in order to unlock new cars and courses. Winning these cars doesn't make too much of a difference to the game other than the fact that the high-class models boast extra horsepower. Those climbing into the *RR* driving seat for the first time will certainly find *Ridge Racer 2*'s World Tour a worthy challenge and ultimately very enjoyable but if you've already left several layers of tread on tracks from the original game then you'll find no great test here until it's a little too late.

[There's a smattering of new courses, nine to be precise]

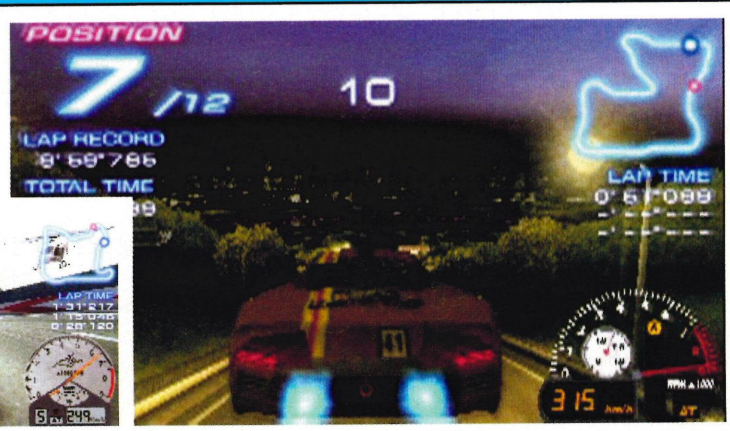
As you might have already guessed the lack of originality is our major gripe with *Ridge Racer 2*: it looks, sounds and plays superbly, but is simply a version copy-and-pasted from the first game with no effort made to make it feel like a worthwhile sequel. There's a smattering of new courses, nine to be precise (careful Namco you nearly hit double figures there), which aren't overly imaginative plus some new but not extra cars as well as some additional plinky sounds to get down to – other than that we can't really see where that extra money is going. The menus, voice-overs and all-round feel of the game is almost identical to the original, making this feel more like some sort of add-on pack than a sequel. The meagre selection of alternative tracks, tunes and cars could have easily been offered for download at a fraction of the cost, but, hey, Sony gots to get paid.

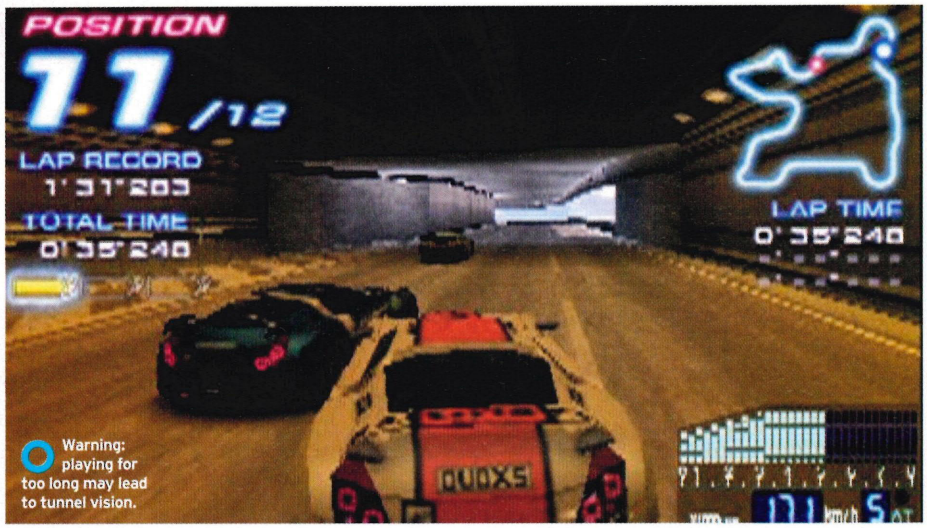
Rather than focus on what hasn't changed, perhaps it's best to look at what has. Aside from the tweaks made to the World Tour, perhaps

The good, the bad and the gorgeous

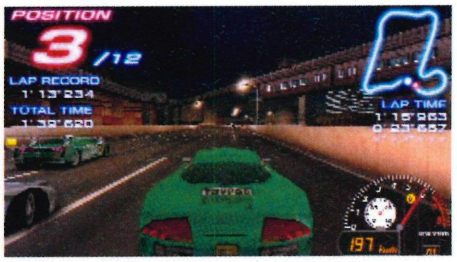
Ridge Racer has a good track record

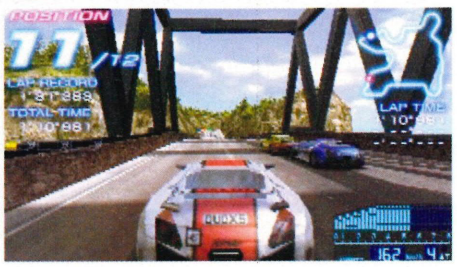
Ridge Racer is famous for producing some of the most scenic sights in videogame history, and *Ridge Racer 2* certainly does its part to carry on the tradition. Sweeping from heavily populated cityscapes to baron countryside and lush bayside resorts, these have to be some of the most captivating environments seen on PSP, and are enough to give the mighty *OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast* something to think about. As the game runs at such a blistering pace you don't have much time to sit back and enjoy the vistas, but what will catch your eye are the various antics going on in the air above your head. Planes perform daring barrel roles, blimps drift effortlessly by and fireworks explode in a shower of luminous colour in celebration of another race won. If only the game as a whole could've been as impressive.





Warning: playing for too long may lead to tunnel vision.



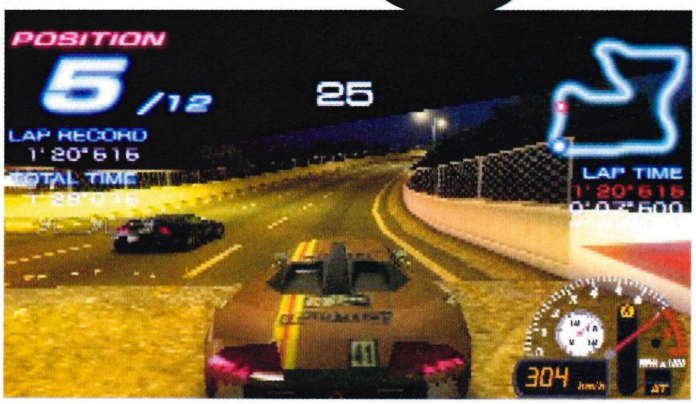


the most pleasing addition comes in the form of the new Arcade, Duel and Survival modes. The revamped Arcade mode is a throwback to the change-chugging days of old and has been improved no end thanks to the inclusion of timed checkpoints giving you that added impetus to make every corner and unlock extra seconds. A similar element of urgency can be found in the Survival mode, which is an eliminator-style race swiped straight from the books of *Burnout*, where the last-placed competitor is bumped from the race at the end of every lap. Survival mode poses a genuine challenge when using the higher class cars and racing against AI or human opponents, making it a very appealing multi-player option. The other new mode is Duel, which is unsurprisingly a stripped down one-on-one race against an AI or human opponent, and, while not the most exciting of contests, it does give you the chance to make it personal.

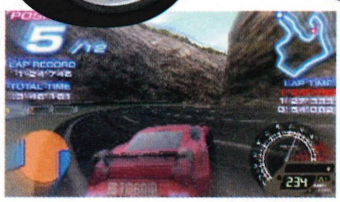
Though these new modes are valuable additions to the *Ridge Racer 2* party (Survival in particular) we're still left wondering who ate all the originality. Check points and eliminators are fun but by no means fresh. In each mode you can race the exact same cars and courses as the main World Tour mode, nothing new, no surprises. When it comes down to it isn't that what we really want from a sequel? Despite being a fantastic game with all the charm and addictive energy of the original, this has nothing much else to give – a seemingly spent force riding on the coattails of its predecessor. This leaves us with a dilemma: just how do you score a great game but one which is almost a carbon copy of the original – which was just a reworking of lots of previous games in the first place? The additional modes, classic tracks and arcade action make *Ridge Racer 2* an essential purchase for race fans not yet acquainted with the first game, but unfortunately it seems the development team has taken the money and ran. Choosing to rehash the original instead of delivering a rejuvenated driving experience is a decision that could damage the franchise's stellar reputation and leave Namco with a lot to prove come the inevitable arrival of *Ridge Racer 3*. ■ **Keith Hennessey**

> **We're left wondering who ate all the originality**

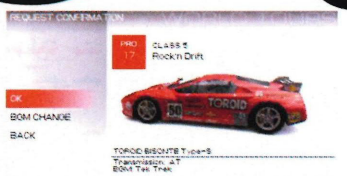
The same great game minus the imagination **82%**



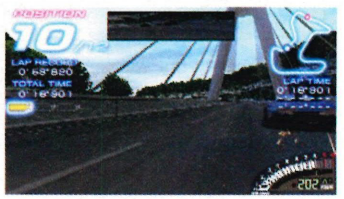
You can change the colour of your car at the start of the race to better suit your mood



There are two different views to choose from: in-car or ass-cam



More wins equal more sexy, sexy cars to choose from



Kick a man when he's down, that's the first thing everyone's taught. Or perhaps our dad was harsh

The cut-scenes are worth playing for. You can almost see the wrinkles on Frankie's forehead!

Don't show it any disrespect...

THE GODFATHER MOB WARS

OUT: 22 SEPT

Publisher **Electronic Arts** / Developer **In-House** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1** / Supports **N/A**

THE Big QUESTIONS

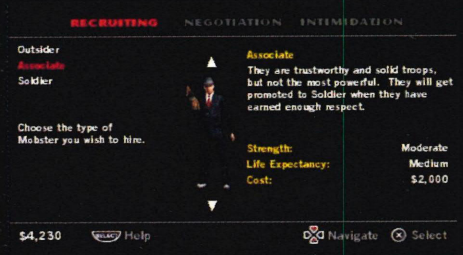
Does this follow *The Godfather* film?
Kind of. It's more a game taking place within *The Godfather* universe full of characters you recognise, such as the fat, wheezing Marlon Brando.

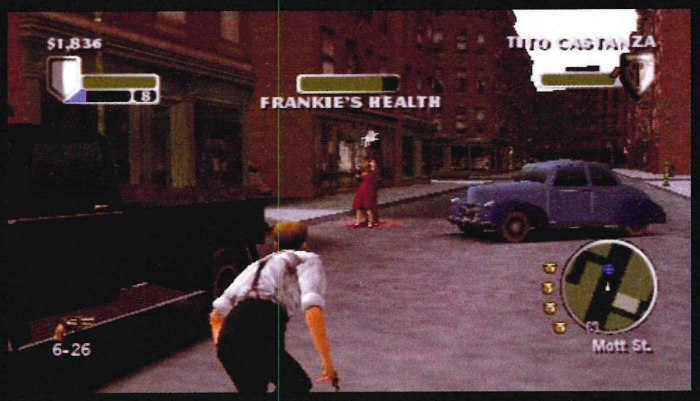
Does it feel like a *Godfather* game?
Surprisingly, yes. The Italian, "'ey Tommy, whatcha doin'" lingo is in there. Because that's how all Mafioso speak. Really, it is.

As Luca, the fat-cheeked Italian Mafioso who introduces you to the world of *The Godfather*, said: "It's all about respect". It's clearly a pivotal moment, as the cinematic feel of the cut-scene combines with the razor-sharp I-can't-believe-it's-not-PlayStation2 visuals to deliver an early knockout punch while you're finding your feet. Yet, for all its good intentions, you're not really paying attention because you're still pressing all the face buttons in stubborn disbelief that you can't skip the cut-scenes

Oh EA. Oh so typical. Oh dear. It's another case of getting the little things wrong, overlooking the small details that make great games, well, great. At heart *The Godfather* is a perfectly decent game. As you might expect, this is a scaled down port of the PS2 behemoth, which has also accommodated for its bout of anorexia by putting on a new dress and hoping no one notices – gone are the PlayStation 2 driving sections, for example. No great loss given the usual lack of control that is par for course with driving sections bolted onto on-foot action games, but they did at least flesh out the city and lend it a sense of scale. Without this, and with restrictive 'Don't leave the mission area!' finger-wagging hemming you in, *The Godfather* feels small in ambition and in size. This isn't so much a world of crime and Mafioso as it is a nicely textured barrio, with the homeless and the drug dealers replaced by noob-friendly EA-approved 'please walk here' and 'now please walk over here' signposts. You'd have to be really, really bad at *The Godfather* not to complete it. Not only has the tendency for missions to complete themselves for you carried over from the PlayStation 2 version but, hell, it's not even possible to get lost any more.

> **At heart** The Godfather is a perfectly **decent game**





In place of getting lost is a bizarre Mob Wars game, a weird cross between a strategy game and a card game. The idea is that you buy underworld members for your territories, who you then control to extort businesses, take over rival territories and so on. Between turns you can also play cards to steal money, beef up your territory members, put police heat on rival mafia families and so on. And it's okay. It's all right. It's not particularly offensive, but it's not something that draws you away from the story missions either, especially as the actual action tends to feel like watered down missions of the main game itself.

For those who have remained blissfully unaware of *The Godfather* when it toured the last-gen consoles, the "main game itself" tends to play out as thus: receive mission from boss, go to shop/restaurant/back alley, talk/extort/whack whoever the boss told you to, run back to car. The structure is more obvious and threadbare without the driving intermissions distracting you from the simplicity of it all, but it remains enjoyable in spite of itself. There's a guilty pleasure in playing the bad guy who gets to smack shop owners' heads against walls until they relent and hand over protection money. It doesn't even have to be mission related, you can slap about whomever you choose. *The Godfather* doesn't address any of the problems usually found in this genre and you'll probably find the controls or the camera failing you more than once. Still, EA is smart enough to know that by dangling carrots, in the form of gorgeous cut-scenes or fast-paced set pieces, in front of your face, you're more willing to turn a blind eye to any minor problems.

> **Enjoyable and a cut above the usual film-licence fare**

That sums up *The Godfather* as a whole. There's nothing hugely wrong or offensive about it, it just suffers myriad tiny problems that could easily have been rectified with a bit more thought – more strategic meat in *Mob Wars*, a bigger sense of scale, a camera that behaved itself, a button to skip the damned cut-scenes. As it is, *The Godfather* is enjoyable and a cut above the usual film-licence fare, yet it had the potential to be so much more. Oh EA. Oh *Godfather*. Oh well. ■

Ryan King

Good but could (and should) have been so much more **78%**

Lights, Camera, Action

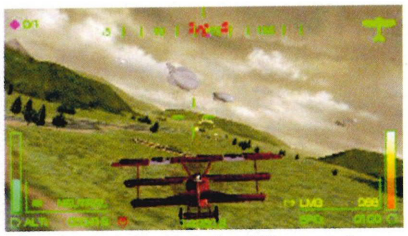
Cut-scenes in 'genuinely good' shocker

If there's one big tick against *The Godfather*'s name that stands out more than the others, it's that the game looks incredible. Well, the game itself is fairly run-of-the-mill, but the cut-scenes... oh Lord, the cut-scenes look simply faaabulous, darling. They're well directed too and look like they could've been plucked from the movie – for the first time ever, playing for the next cut-scene and chunk of storyline actually takes priority over playing to see what the gameplay throws your way. So, very EA but, whatever, it works so we're happy.

Videogame Logic Rule #54: hiding behind a wooden wheelbarrow will save your life. It's true!

There are shootouts on the bridge to fluff up where the driving missions would've been

Remember, beating up elderly men isn't cool. And it fails you missions, which also isn't cool



After those bounders, chaps! It's a case of sticky wickets for this German

In the hangar, you can view 3D representations of all the planes plus various interesting stats

Escape from the world and become a commander of the skies

PILOT ACADEMY

OUT: NOW

Publisher **Rising Star Games** / Developer **Kuju** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1-4** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN Multi-player, Game Sharing**

THE BIG QUESTIONS

How does it deal with normally complex controls and display readouts?
By abandoning many of them and instead focusing on what's fun about flying – the direct hands-on command over aeroplanes.

What's the voice acting like?
Quite possibly the worst you can imagine featuring what sounds like overly libidinous porn stars and camp German officers.

Before even starting to read this review you already knew whether you will be buying *Pilot Academy* or not; you've probably just ordered it online and are only actually reading this in anticipation of its arrival. Otherwise, you're probably not reading this at all. Sadly that's the nature of flight-simulators – like *Pilot Academy*, the first of the genre on PSP – and also the nature of its target audience.

For those curious, the game has been designed specifically for PSP, so it makes excellent use of the wide screen when displaying beautiful vistas (with a decent draw distance), and the controls are relatively simple. Though the analogue joystick can be tricky to use – far more tricky than is tolerable to begin with – but with practice you become accustomed and slowly develop a feel for the many different planes available.

Missions are varied and enjoyable, bite-sized aerial adventures (dusting crops, taking photos, shooting down the Kaiser's finest air barons, and so on). The eclectic mix of civilian and military-based tasks make for an excellent and balanced title with something for everyone. The military missions are great fun and allow control over both sides in various conflicts, from WWI to present day combat. Special mention must also go to the excellent challenge stages which normally have a more quirky rather than serious goal. One of the best is Barnstorming which, despite being the shortest challenge available, is stupidly good fun. Trophies and medals are awarded for great flying motivating you to replay levels, while each successfully completed mission unlocks further challenges and also aircraft to use in Freeflight mode. There are also action-packed multi-player modes available, though annoyingly only Deathmatch mode supports game sharing.

> **The eclectic mix of missions makes for a balanced title**

Unfortunately, while it avoids the repetition of more serious pilot games, making for an exceedingly fun and varied title, it still lacks the surreal or exaggerated (dare we say 'mainstream'?) style needed to entice and convert casual newcomers. But as someone who has already bought it and is only reading this in anticipation, you probably wouldn't have been happy with that anyway. ■

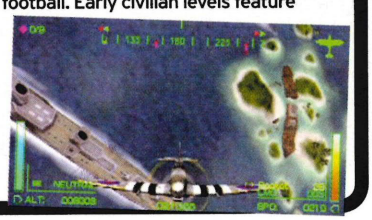
John Szczepaniak

Undeniably the best handheld flight-sim ever **84%**

Stuff to do

A precision mission of collision

It would be wrong to not mention some of the many diverse tasks you're given. The simple and light-hearted nature of these make the game fun. Yes, it's a flight-sim, but it is actually fun. Military missions are fairly prosaic, simply involving blowing things up, but challenge stages can get really wacky, even involving table football. Early civilian levels feature sightseeing, the photographing of elephants, and various taxi services. One mission even sees you piloting the President's plane; we've no idea what it involves, because we were too busy crashing Mr Gee Dubya Bee into the ground. Repeatedly.



What a draw distance: you can actually see the loops leading up to that bridge

Missions are varied, and while it looks boring, dusting crops is actually fun

Aww, a tiny kiwi riding a hot air balloon. *The New Zealand Story* is arguably the best game on the compilation

Actually, maybe *Cameltry* is the best game? Either way, for an arcade title it suits the handheld

A retro compilation that hesitantly holds itself back

TAITO LEGENDS: POWER UP

OUT: 6 OCT

Publisher **Xplosiv** / Developer **Taito** / Price **£19.99** / Players **1-2** / Supports **Game share**

THE Big QUESTIONS

So how many games are there?
25 in total. 21 original Taito arcade titles, which are perfectly emulated, with four remakes (see boxout).

How similar is it to the Japanese version?
Very similar! It includes 19 of the original 20 games; *Rainbow Islands Extra* is sadly missing. Plus it features six extra games!

Turn to the back of this magazine right now. There you'll find the "Connect" section which explains how to use emulators on your PSP for free - the same variety of emulators which allow you to play the games on this compilation. Downloading such things off the Internet would of course be piracy and therefore illegal. Normally illegal activities lead to prison, and prison leads to... well, let's not go there. This compilation on the other hand offers an affordable and legal way to enjoy a wide selection of Taito classics with some extras thrown in.

Commendably, Taito raised the bar for retro compilations on consoles, with its precedent-setting and very generous *Taito Legends* releases on PS2 and Xbox. So it's unfortunate to find it lost something of its former sparkle when it comes to this iteration, with Capcom raising the retro bar even higher for its *Capcom Classics Collection Remixed* on PSP. Taito Legends: Power Up contains a lot of good games but few great games; *Capcom Classics* meanwhile is purely must-play classics.

> **An affordable and legal way to enjoy a selection of classics**

The slightly underwhelming selection could have been avoided (and we emphasise slightly, this is still a good compilation and better than what Namco puts out). Taito has an exceedingly excellent back-catalogue, so it's strange that for this PSP release it has taken a seemingly random hotchpotch of titles from the two console *Taito Legends* compilations, while also leaving a few glaring omissions. We were never expecting *Elevator Action Returns*, but what happened to *Zoo Keeper* and the other great games that are curiously missing? The fact it omitted *Rainbow Islands Extra* - which was in the Japanese release - gives us a sneaky feeling Taito is holding back its best titles for a second instalment to be released in a few months' time. This is of course pure speculation, but Taito did the very same thing when bringing over the Japanese console versions of *Taito Legends*.

The emulation is perfect and several games are especially good fun; like *The New Zealand Story*, *Cameltry*, *Pheonix*, *Lunar Rescue*, and *Space Dungeon*. But one can't help but feel Taito is holding back. ■

John Szczepaniak

A good compilation, but it could've been much better **76%**

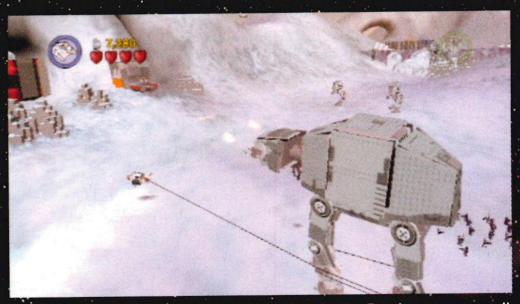
Update, Shmupdate!

Remakes that just don't cut it...

Retro remakes make fans nervous. All too often the graphics are haphazardly redone in polygons, while the gameplay undergoes bizarre alterations. The resulting title resembles the original but isn't nearly as good. Other times it's like polishing a rough diamond - the original is made infinitely better. The four remakes here (mostly) fall into the former category. *Balloon Bomber* is one of the worst games available, a remake was unwarranted. *Crazy Balloon* is slightly better but forgettable, while *The Legend Of Cage*'s altered controls render it nearly unplayable. *Cameltry Enhanced* is the best of the bunch. Unfortunately, these won't keep you occupied for long.

Why did they butcher the controls of *The Legend Of Kage Enhanced?*

Were we all just tripping on sugar and E-numbers as kids? *Rastan Saga* isn't fun



Yet again exposing another fatal flaw in the Empire, you can pull an AT-AT over with a sucker and piece of string

A cynical marketing ploy? Maybe, but you how can anyone resist the chance to fly a Lego Slave 1?

LEGO STAR WARS II: THE ORIGINAL TRILOGY

THE Big QUESTIONS

Is it better than the first game?
Yes because it's set in the original *Star Wars* universe. No Jarr Jarr Binks, no midi-chlorians, just Han Solo, a blaster at your side and big space battles that don't rely on the luck of a snotty-nosed kid.

How big is this game?
The main quest is relatively small, but you'll often find yourself sidetracked by secrets and unlockables. It's not a chore to replay levels with new characters and ships.

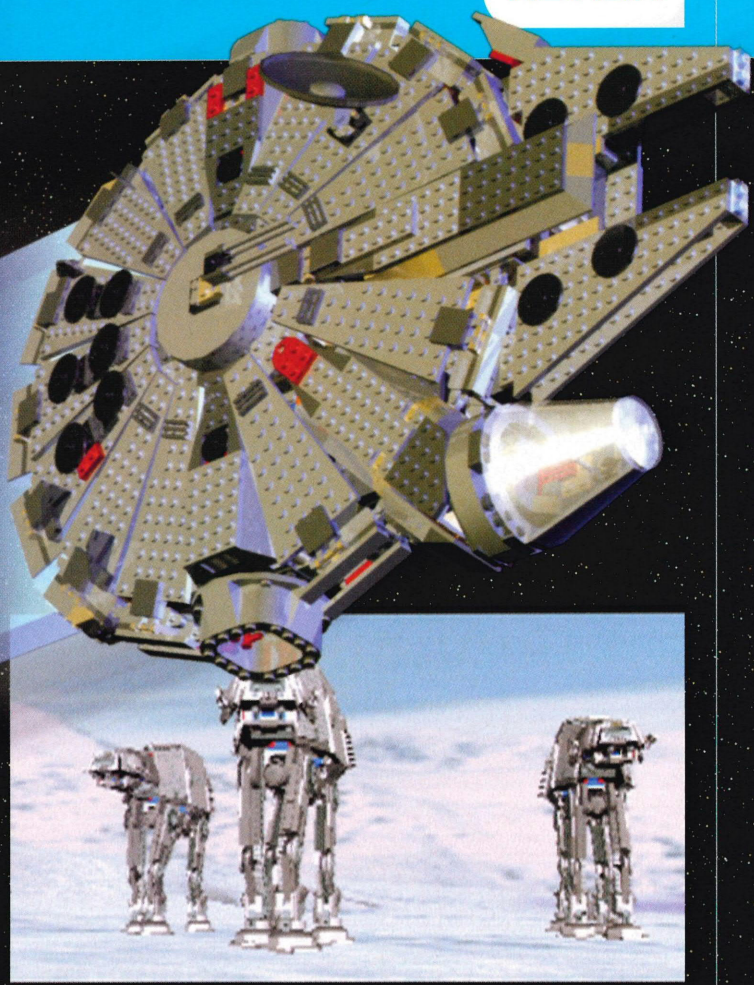
OUT: NOW

Publisher **LucasArts** / Developer **Traveller's Tales** / Price **£34.99** / Players **4** /

Grown men have repeatedly extended their sabers at the thought of being able to fly a Lego Millennium Falcon through the annals of the second Death Star (and knock off that dinky little satellite dish). Previously we saw the three diabolical newer films recreated in those lovely Technicolor Danish bricks on our home consoles. The first *Lego Star Wars* was fun, but a little short lived if you ignored the wealth of secrets. The same seems to be true of its sequel, but it's the setting that makes this more of a winner than the last. To coincide with the DVD releases of the original cuts of the trilogy along with a load of *Lego Star Wars* kits, *Star Wars Lego II* is based on the original films - all three of them. And they've been ported to PSP with hardly any compromise. In fact, a few little extras have been added because the previous game was never released for the system, including the final levels of each episode of the prequels.

So, for under the price of a real Lego Falcon, you can fly the beast and also use every single character, ship and vehicle from the entire *Star Wars Lego* universe, which can't be bad. It's not all fun and games, however, as what should be the greatest and most elegant weapon in a *Star Wars* game, well, just isn't. The Lightsaber, a geek's very wet dream, is a bit of a limp shiny sausage here. Instead of deflecting shots straight at your enemies, you'll just rebound them willy-nilly at walls, the sky and even your team-mates like a drunken Jedi. Also, when you think you're slicing someone who

"I thought they smelt bad on the outside!", and no, you don't get to stick Luke in the guts of a Tauntaun



is right beside you, the Saber will fly straight through them leaving a Jedi, yes a Jedi, open to easy attack from a lowly Storm Trooper. Most of the time you're better off switching to a character who can use a blaster, such as a Rebel Soldier, to defeat most enemies. Even a Lightsaber thrust down into an enemy's skull won't necessarily kill him in one hit.

in the back halfway through when the next wave appears. This isn't that much of a problem, it's just annoying since in effect you have infinite lives. Every time you die you'll only lose studs, the currency of the game. These are collected throughout levels by destroying objects. If you run out of studs by dying too much, it doesn't matter,

[Even the intro sequence encourages experimentation]

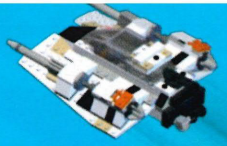
This means that Jedi are only useful for shifting blocks or using their Force push powers on distant foes.

Combat becomes even more annoying when continually spawning enemies appear. Most of the time there's a switch to pull to stop this from happening. When there isn't, you'll have to kill a wave of enemies then start work on a puzzle only to be shot you'll continue to re-spawn as often as the enemies you're fighting.

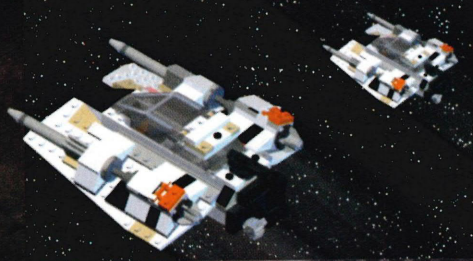
Most of the rest of the action is adventure based: pulling the arms off Storm Troopers, pushing and building blocks then using the Force to make ways for slow but useful characters to unlock doors for you. Each character has a set of skills not necessarily completely unique but certainly unique to their class. There are light and dark Jedi, bounty hunters, droids, rebel soldiers, Storm Troopers, just about anyone that's been in any *Star Wars* film can be unlocked and used in any level. With over 50 characters, you won't be short of things to do. The puzzles are pretty simple and you'll work out what you need to be doing from the outset - occasionally there's a door that you need to access hidden by scenery, but this happens rarely. The main game isn't massive, but it'll keep you going for a while. Once

Leia was annoyed that her first present from Jabba, a Rampant Rabbit, didn't come with any batteries

Wampas love eating Lego, especially tiny blue blocks



Each character has loads of comic animation. Leia bitch-slaps and Han swaggers



There's a lot of back tracking but since it's *Star Wars*, you won't mind

Uuugh! uugh! ugh! uugghhh!

you've completed a level, you'll be able to replay it in Freeplay mode where you can use any unlocked character to find extras you missed the first time around. However, you can have some great fun mixing up famous scenes yourself. How about reviving Han after being frozen by a peck on the cheek from Chewy? You can fight the Emperor as a Tusken Raider or use a Tie Interceptor to blow up a Death Star. Not only this, but the cut-scenes recreate every famous scene from the films with comedy *Lego Star Wars* treatment. One of our favourites was at the end of *The Empire Strikes Back*, where Luke gets a new mechanical hand. The limb detaches itself and starts attacking the other characters in the famous window scene.

So if there's money, what can you buy? Well, this is where a small adventure game turns into a humongous unlocking affair. If you want to collect everything, it's going to take a lot of back tracking and secret searching. This, of course, will earn you studs and unlock more stuff to buy in the shop. There are stacks of characters to buy and best of all – just like in real Lego – you can mix and match their bodies and heads. Even the intro sequence encourages experimentation – up pops Yoda in a bikini! How about the Emperor's body with the head of the blue elephant thing from Jabba's band? Drag along a miniature Death Star behind an X-wing. You might not be able to afford or have the room for all this Lego in real life, but you can play with it here, and anywhere you can take your PSP.

[Like in real Lego you can mix and match bodies and heads]

Even after you've gone back and unlocked everything, there's even a Co-operative mode where you can use Wi-Fi to control two of the characters and help each other through any of the levels. Another PSP exclusive is the inclusion of a four-player Game Share Battle mode where players fight it out to capture Han Solo in carbonite. They're both great fun, but unfortunately you'll be waiting ages for the games to set up.

Lego Star Wars II is an improvement over the original, only due to when it's set. It also gives PSP owners the chance to see the wonders of this unlikely but welcome crossover. Here's to 'Barbie Does Dallas'! ■

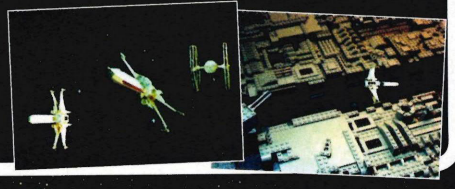
Henrietta Rowlatt

It's a relatively easy game with oodles of humour **88%**

There is another...

Those cheeky Danes nicked the idea off a bloke on the Internet!

Before official *Star Wars Lego*, a mysterious man called Maestro S Fujita recreated images from the original films in normal Lego. It took him four years to complete and you can see his mammoth efforts at www5b.biglobe.ne.jp/~mbsf/sworde.htm His Star Destroyers and Millennium Falcon are unbelievably impressive. They look almost as big as the models they used in the actual films. But as with most things *Star-Wars*-fan-related, he should get out more.



Capcom's Dreamcast gem turns portable

POWER STONE COLLECTION

OUT: NOW

Publisher **Capcom** / Developer **In-house** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1-4** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN multi-player, Game Share**

THE Big QUESTIONS

So it looks as good as the DC original?
We'd go on record to say that it looks even better – helped no end by widescreen support. Get in.

Power Stone 1 or 2, which is better?
The original is better for the purists, but the insane charm of the sequel is pretty damn hard to resist.

It's disappointing just how few people have heard of *Power Stone*. Released on Dreamcast in 1999, Capcom's fully 3D beat-'em-up was not only revolutionary in its use of interactive scenery and all three axes of movement, but also incredibly good fun. Thank the fighting gods then, that Capcom has seen fit to bestow another of its classic franchises on us PSP owners.

After *Ghosts 'N Goblins* last month, it would seem we are being spoiled. *Power Stone Collection*, comprising of the original games as well as its truly insane sequel, is as perfect a port as we could ever have hoped for. The vibrant colours and sharp clarity of the Dreamcast original are perfectly captured on the PlayStation Portable's widescreen, and the one-stick-four-button control system is identical to that of the Dreamcast. Lovely.

[The vibrant colours and sharp clarity are captured perfectly]

For those who have never experienced *Power Stone* before, it's a devilishly simple concept. Four fighters, one arena, and a shed load of mayhem. You can tear pillars from the earth and swing them at an opponent's head, shoot missiles, hurl tables and generally cause chaos at every turn. It makes for a magnificent multi-player experience, and mercifully, the PSP Wi-Fi games produce no lag whatsoever, even during the game's more hectic moments.

The sequel, imaginatively titled *Power Stone 2*, is insane. Where in the original, you fought in small, tight arenas with the focus on pure skill, *Power Stone 2* is all about the craziness. Huge dynamic set pieces tear up the action, á là *Kung Fu Chaos* on Xbox, and you can quite easily find yourself on the back of a dragon one minute and back on Earth the next. It makes it more a party game than a pure fighter, but an excellent one nevertheless. Also, *Power Stone 2* supports game sharing, which its predecessor inexplicably doesn't. Good stuff.

Power Stone Collection is a superb title. Two games in one, with a host of VMU (remember the old DC memory cards?) mini-games, unlockable extras, and hour upon hour of insane fighting brilliance. You really owe it to yourself to get involved. ■ **Jon Denton**

A superb port of a superb game – get it. **91%**

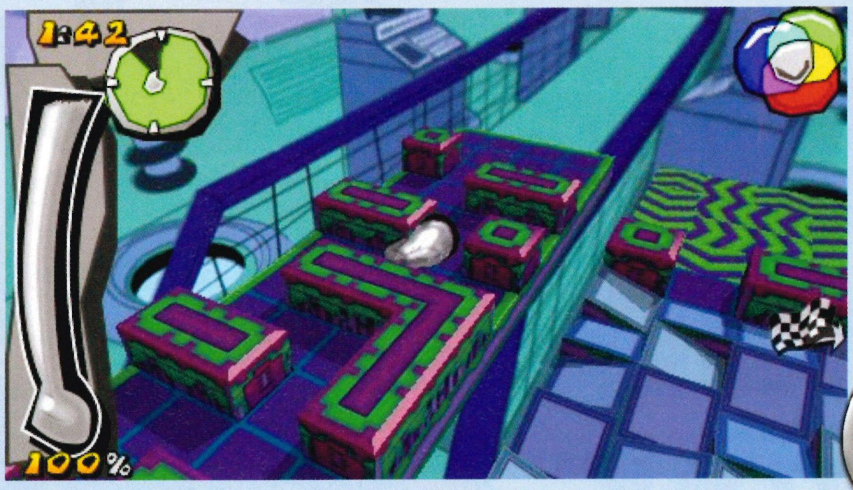
Mini eggs

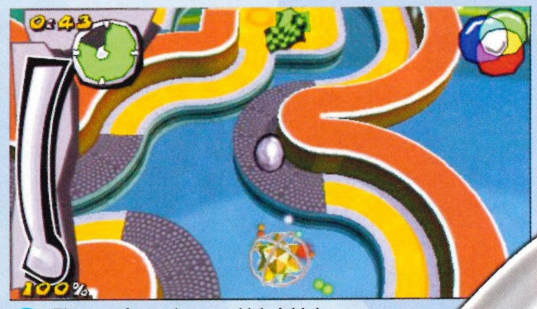
VMU mini-games ahoy!

If anyone remembers Dreamcast memory cards, then they win an award. The award is the self-satisfaction of knowing that the Dreamcast had a really cool memory card. It slotted into the joypad, and had a little screen for showing you pictures, playing mini-games and bullying Tamagotchis. It even had a D-pad. *Power Stone*'s VMU mini-games make it into the PSP version, and provide an amusing aside for anyone bored with all the scrapping. With all the usual unlockable extras, it makes *Power Stone Collection* a very healthy package.

It's a far cry from the precision of *Street Fighter*, that's for sure

Amazingly, this is not *Fantastic Four*'s The Thing. Don't tell *Marvel* though





These surfaces slow your blob right down, handy for turning corners

As irritating as a rectal thermometer

MERCURY MELTDOWN

OUT: 29 SEPT

Publisher **Ignition** / Developer **In-house** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1-2** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN Multi-player**

THE Big QUESTIONS

Hey! It's gone all cartoony! That's right, but that doesn't mean it's fun and happy - because it's not. It's a stressful little puzzle game. Don't let it's cutesy facade fool you.

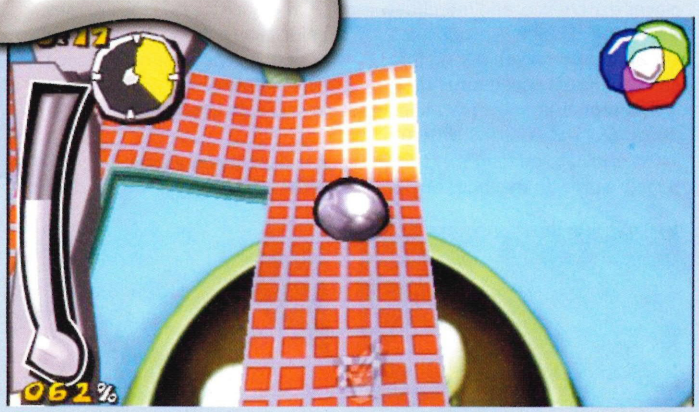
Maybe it's just challenging? Perhaps, but the anger that builds when your blob slips off yet again is absolutely phenomenal. Blood really does begin to boil in your veins.

When PSP was launched there were two puzzle games that came highly recommended: the musically cool *Lumines* and the stark metallic *Mercury*. *Lumines* had its groovy tunes and fancy backgrounds and *Mercury* had Archer MacClean's good name and some challenging gameplay. Both were examples of what was to come with PSP in the future and made it feel all Eighties sci-fi and somehow retro-futuristic. *Lumines 2* will be coming soon and we can't wait for that, but in the meantime *Mercury Meltdown* is here and even though it's a sequel it somehow feels like a step back.

Maybe it's because Archer's not involved any more. He designed the first one and, using his skills with gaming physics, he took a reasonably original concept and made a pretty cool puzzle game out of it. Unfortunately he's absent from the sequel and as such the whole tone and feel of *Mercury* has changed. Gone are the cool and classy metallic colours of the original and in their place are brash colours, cartoony graphics and the feeling that someone put the wrong type of mushrooms in the soup. Obviously, the core gameplay remains the same, you still have to guide the blob of mercury to the goal by tilting the level's floor with the analogue nub, but there has been more stuff added that just confuses the matter and takes away the beautiful simplicity of what we had in the original.

> **Even though it's a sequel it somehow feels like a step back**

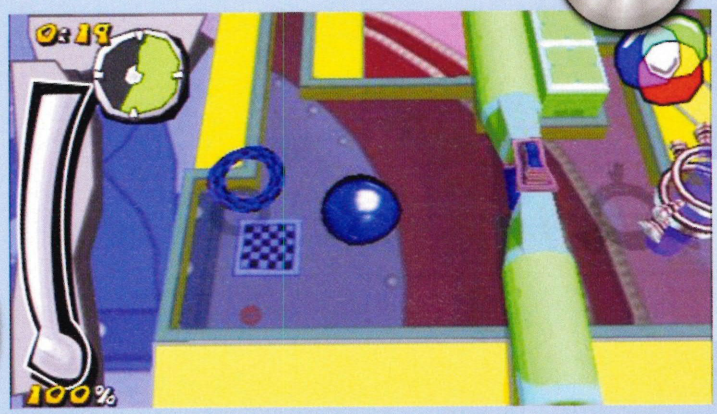
The main additions are the various states the mercury blob can be transformed into. In the original you just had to worry about getting it the correct colour to open switches and pass through doors, but now you still have to fiddle about with that and make sure your blob is in the correct state to get through certain parts of the levels. You have a slightly more liquid state so the mercury moves (read: falls) a lot faster but breaks apart even easier; a solid state that turns the blob into a ball so it rolls off the edges a lot faster; and another sort of squidgy



Sometimes the close-up view makes it really difficult to see where you're going, but you can zoom out to see more of the level

Oh God. Sometimes when you see the start of a level, you just want to die

These bumpers will push your blob right off the level



state that holds the blob together and slows it right down, we like this one since accidental tilts don't send it flying off the edge and also means you don't have to start all over again.

These new states mean that the levels become even more convoluted, as not only do you have to worry about splitting the blob and turning it different colours, and then mixing the colours to get even more shades and trying to separate them so they don't mix together at inopportune times, but you also have to change the states as required and sometimes even have two different states on the go at once. Maybe even three, we're not sure, our patience ran out way before we got to that point. While the time limit is counting down, bits of your blob are disappearing off the edges, and you've still got to pick up the bonus icons, your only reward being more mind-troubling levels and some really average mini-games. These are the multi-player games, well 'multi' isn't the word for it, 'two' is more appropriate, which seems like a bit of a jip when you think of all the fun the Race game would be when four or more people are all fighting to keep their blobs on track, or the Paint game where you have to cover a level with the colour of your blob. As it is, however, with just two people half-heartedly caring about 'winning' it gets stale very quickly.

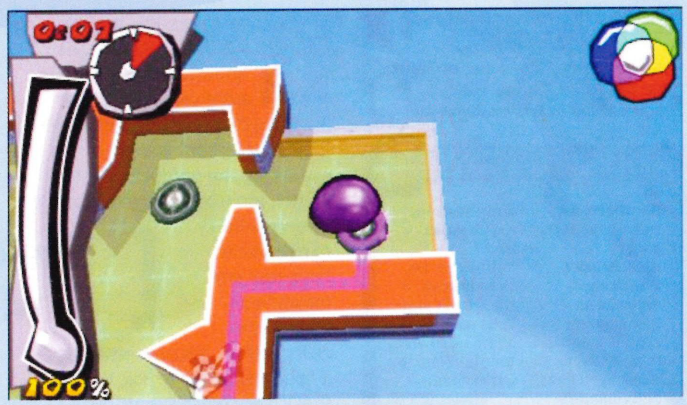
[Meltdown will see an increase in violent attacks on strangers]

In between sighing and getting very angry you have to wonder what the point of playing *Mercury Meltdown* is. It's become so much more of challenge, with all the colour changing and state shifting, that you actually feel sad and depressed when a new level is unlocked, despite all the happy colours. But when your blob rolls off yet again and your face screws up in a grimace of sheer hate and anger you start to wish for a nice peaceful game of *Liberty City Stories* or *Killzone: Liberation*. The experts are wrong, it's not violent games they need to worry about turning people into psychopaths, it's ridiculously annoying puzzlers like *Mercury Meltdown* that will see an increase in violent attacks on random strangers.

Tim Empey

Infuriating and distressing. Games are meant to be fun. **63%**

Bumpers, see-saws, colour changing there's so much to do in each level

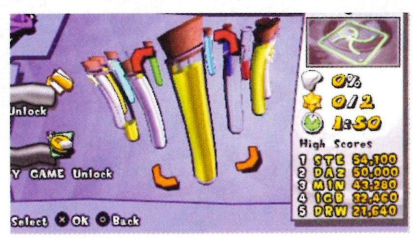


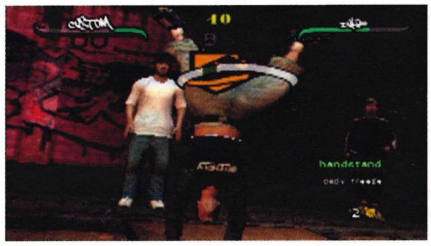
You have to change the colour of the blob in order to open gates, this makes *Mercury Meltdown* even less fun

Arrgh! There's loads

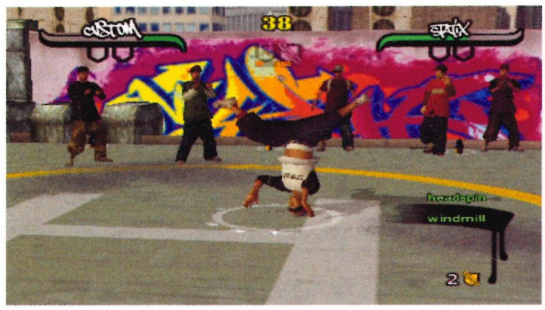
Double the levels equals twice the anger

As you complete each stage these test tubes fill up depending on how well you did, and as they fill up you unlock more and more levels, and the party games. The thing is there comes a point when you don't want to unlock any more levels and the dread that fills your gaming soul is unbelievable. It becomes a somewhat masochistic exercise as the number of levels swells and you know you'll have to beat them because you spent good money for the 'pleasure'. Thankfully we didn't spend any money on it and could stop without that sort of guilt hanging over our heads.





Keeping your balance for as long as possible will gain you much respect from the crowd



Poppin' and lockin' in the palm of your hand

B-BOY

OUT: NOW

Publisher **Sony** / Developer **In-House** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1-2** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN multi-player**

THE BIG QUESTIONS

So what's on this supposedly great soundtrack? Obviously it depends on taste, but we'll happily listen to pre-Fergie Black Eyed Peas or Cymande's *Brothers On The Slide*.

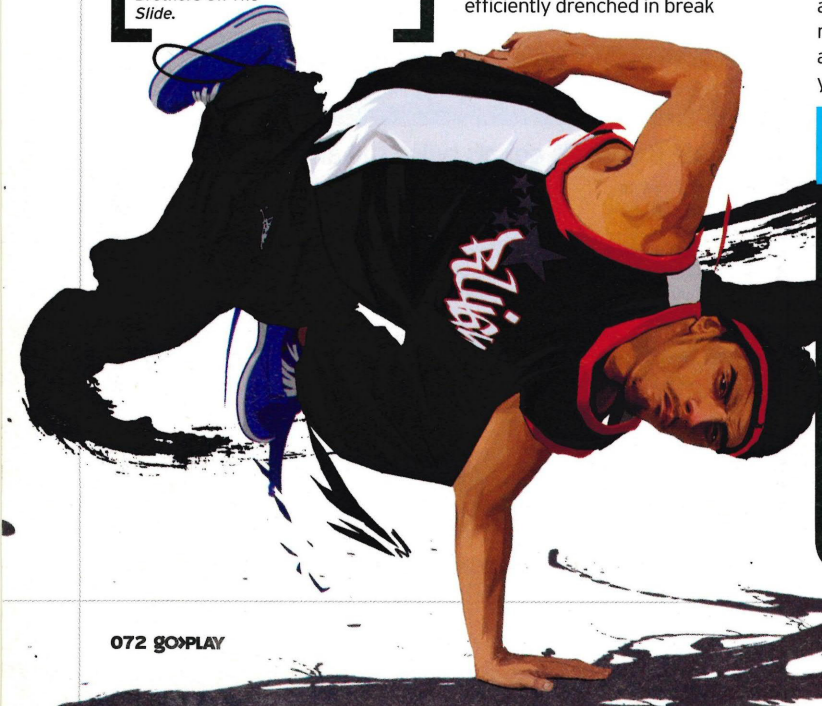
Are there any real B-boys in it? Yep. 40 of 'em, to be precise. If the name Crazy Legs means anything to you, then it's time to get excited.

There's an ugly trend in this industry that sees 'knowledgeable' gamers automatically dismiss anything that could be considered 'street' or 'urban'. Instead of examining the product's relative merits, too often people will cast it aside in a flurry of near racist 'faux-rap' arm movements and Brixton colloquialism. You can envisage it happening with *B-Boy*, a game that is very much urban, but so efficiently drenched in break dancing style, culture and music that is should be unanimously admired. Nobody castigates Tony Hawk for capturing skate culture, after all.

Anyone with a healthy interest in all things breaking will fall in love with *B-Boy*. The game treats its subject matter with affection and skill, encapsulating the ultra-competitive yet friendly and respectful nature of the 'sport', and firmly distancing itself from all mention of gangstas and bling. It's all about the music and the moves, you see. And how. The soundtrack is immense, mixing modern hip-hop classics with old-school funk and breaks – it's good enough to listen to on its own. To do that, though, would be to miss out on the *Tekken*-meets-*Dancing-Stage*-meets-*Tony-Hawk's*-style action. Yes, *B-Boy* is a melting pot of gaming ideas, and a tasty one at that.

> The **game treats** its subject with **affection and skill**

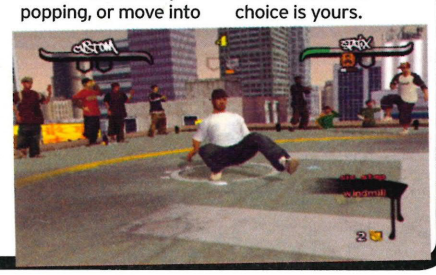
After creating your own B-boy or girl, and getting some basic training sections out of the way, you're left to battle your way up the break dancing ranks by taking part in tournaments and one-on-one street battles. As you progress, you gain new moves (and there are a LOT of new moves), new clothes and



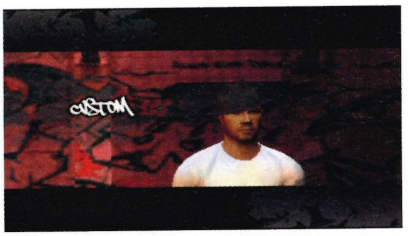
Daily routine

How to create a B-Boy step

It's best to start with a Top Rock, the basic break dancing step that keeps you on your feet, before delving into the tricky stuff. Making sure you hit the blue tab, transfer into a six-step, and then a windmill, before hitting a baby-freeze (like a *THPS* lip-trick). From there, the world is your oyster. Do you go back to your feet for some body popping, or move into the windmill for some backslide and turtle shell action. The choice is yours.



Don't expect to see one of these windmills on a wind farm


We forgot to give him a name, but then decided 'Custom' was actually pretty good

The way you decide which B-boy goes first is rather odd

new tunes. Simple. What's slightly more confusing, however, is the dancing itself. It takes a good couple of hours to really get the hang of *B-Boy*'s control system.

Coloured circles rotate around the feet of your dancer, attached to which are little tabs that arrive in time to the beats. You tap the left shoulder button in time to the music, and use the four face buttons to activate the four basic dance steps. Still with us? Okay, from there you can tap in *Tony Hawk's*-style combos to access your advanced dance moves, but make sure you do it in time to the music (and the blue tabs), or your routine will be ridiculed. It's complicated, but when it clicks it actually feels great; you are given the freedom to create a fun and expressive routine, and because the focus is on keeping in time to the music, it actually feels like you're dancing.

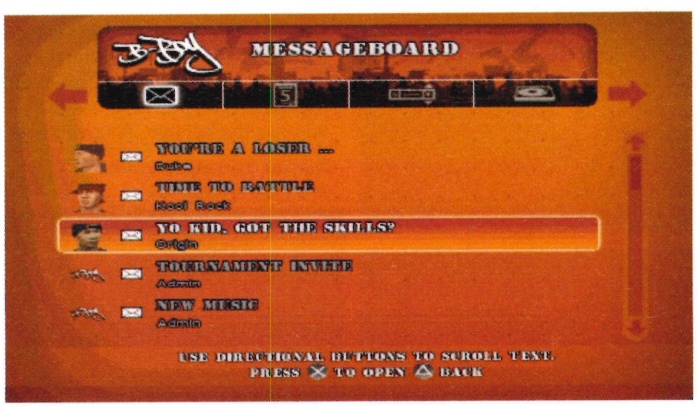
The one-on-one battles are turn based, and mark each dancer on different elements be it style, rhythm or creativity. If you beat the other dancer in more areas of expertise than they do, then you win the battle. However, in the heat of 'combat', it can be very difficult to keep track of the areas of dance you should be concentrating on in order to win, meaning that most of the time you'll just be trying your best and hoping to get a good result at the end. More realistic perhaps, but it doesn't make for a great videogame structure.

[The potential for showing off in multi-player is huge]

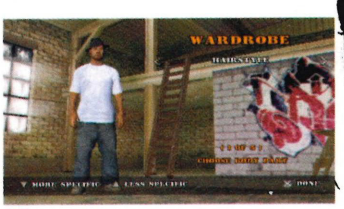
Also, until you start unlocking a decent variety of moves, your routines can become seriously stale, and it's all too easy to get stuck with bad habits – always transferring between the same two moves, for example. However, *B-Boy* is certainly not a throwaway title to be played for an hour and forgotten about. It takes time, practice and dedication – like a beat-'em-up – and to get the most out of it, you will need to put in the hours.

Top players will be pulling off moves and creating routines that will have novices spellbound, and the potential for showing off in multi-player is huge. In an ideal world, *B-Boy* will take the PSP world by storm, but unfortunately it's likely to remain a niche product so most of your time will be spent on the practice mats or the single-player tournaments, which isn't such a bad thing really. Still, this is an excellent, original and downright funky title that suits the world of PSP perfectly, and it would be a crime if it was ignored. So give it a try, you might just like it. ■ **Jon Denton**

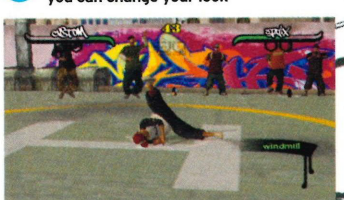
A pleasant surprise. Chalk another one up for Sony **83%**



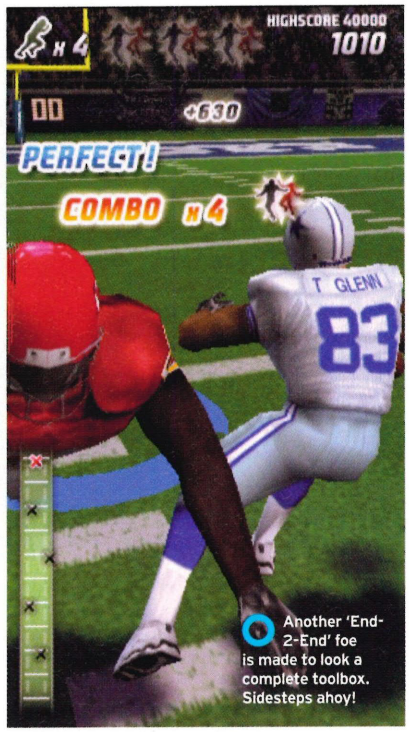
This is where you get to select your day's activities, the very brown computer



Once you unlock some decent threads you can change your look



There's a yellow flag on the field as officials try to separate two line-dancers



Another 'End-2-End' foe is made to look a complete toolbox. Sidesteps ahoy!

EA takes us back to the gridiron grind

MADDEN NFL 07

OUT: NOW

Publisher **Electronic Arts** / Developer **In-house** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1-4** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN multi-player, Wi-Fi Internet multi-player**

THE Big QUESTIONS

Will it confuse gamers on this side of the pond? Inevitably it will, but the 'Ask Madden' and 'Training Camp' features lend enough of a hand to convert any willing novice in a matter of days.

What about the behind-the-scenes management of a franchise? Sounds boring. If you don't want to handle matters such as contract renewals or simply having the correct number of squad members, your assistant can step in.

It seems but a few weeks since Pittsburgh Steelers fans placed their comically over-sized foam hands back into the cupboard from whence they came, cherishing memories of Super Bowl XL, yet it's already time for another EA-branded official offering to land on our doorstep. So, how does it fare? Well, the answer's a mixture of the good, the misguided and the tacked-on feature.

To begin with, those with a passing interest in the ol' pigskin should check out the returning Training Camp. In Franchise mode, each field position carries a handful of practice mini-games which can be played to earn a smattering of attribute points. Alongside a number of more obvious athletic tests lie a few outings that offer a better introduction to the sport's tactics than the hustle and bustle of an actual game (for example chasing and sacking runners while trying to avoid moving coloured bollards representing a defensive line). All in all, it's the kind of feature that would prove welcome in a (ugh) soccer game, offering an alternate feeder club-style income stream as an optional extra.

A mixture of the good, the misguided and the tacked-on

Digression over, once you hit the field it's evident that the running game in Madden's previous outing on PSP has seen some work. In an attempt to beef up formerly swiftly ended plays, EA has included a number of highlight moves (special jukes, weight-shifts and painful sacks) that would usually be situated on a second analogue stick, back home. Here though, they're activated by the painfully protracted triangle-button-plus-direction method making them both almost useless and a jarring contrast to the impressively fluid nature of the passing game, as a whole.

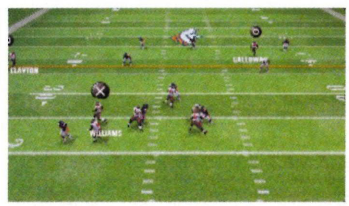
As for the tacked-on feature, that'll be 'End-2-End', an extended mini-game requiring players to turn their PSPs sideways before pressing directional keys to avoid oncoming tacklers and return a kick-off for a touchdown. While the natural human high-score instinct lends this quite a draw, it's not worth forking out 35 pounds for and, as is so often the case, neither is the game itself if you own the last one. ■ **Dave Shaw**

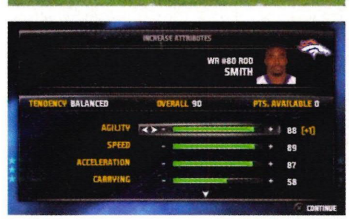
A great introduction, rather pointless for regulars **74%**

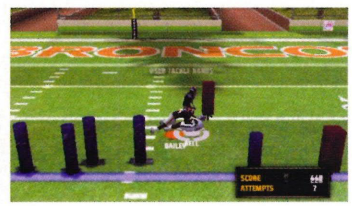
One Madden World

Connectivity doesn't end at ad hoc and infrastructure, you know

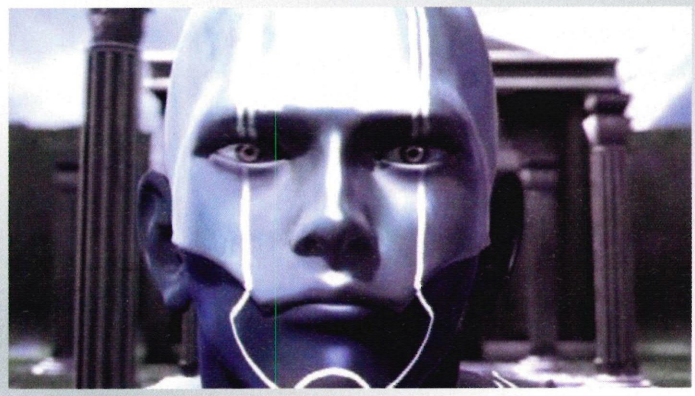
Quite why anyone would go to the trouble of investing in the necessary equipment to attempt the following we don't know, but EA has made it possible for players to enjoy its NFL franchise season at any location under any conditions. Profile data, including franchise details, rosters and schedules, will be transferable between the PSP and PS2 iterations of *Madden NFL 07*, meaning that those irksome day-to-day troubles such as winning the AFC Championship game but not having enough time to play the Super Bowl before going to the shops, have vanished. That, dear friends, is progress.







"Yeah, yo' in my house now, sucka!" This sport does things to you



Two boxes at once to smash, ADAM is so lucky

All that glitters ain't gold – don't buy this stairway to heaven

RENGOKU II: THE STAIRWAY TO H.E.A.V.E.N.

OUT: 20 OCT

Publisher **Konami** / Developer **Hudson Soft** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1-4** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN Multi-player, Game Share**

THE Big QUESTIONS

So, robots right? They're cool and stuff? Yes, robots are cool, and yes you can get some ace weapons like a big hammer stuck to ADAM's head. The only problem is that when you're using it, the clunky timing and controls make you feel all empty inside, like road kill.

I absolutely loved the original! Is it even better? You did? Well, then you'll be pleased to hear that this is even better. But perhaps you should see a doctor about your affliction.

Yeah, it all looks very nice but that doesn't mean it's very good

If you're going to make a game with lofty ideals comparing the birth of robots with the birth of man, don't set the action in a place called 'Superbia'. Superbia? Is this some kind of Italian aural test? No, it's *Rengoku 2*, and it's just as dire as the first instalment.

A harsh statement maybe, but when the only improvement that's been made on the original is to use the analogue nub, we're certain it won't take long to sway you to our point of view. The game is pitched as an RPG and it has weapons and upgradable parts that can be placed on each of the robot ADAM's limbs. Pick up the weapons, then equip them, simple. Well, no. In order to equip anything you must return ADAM to the terminal, which means any progress made on the map has to be retraced afterwards. Backtracking isn't fun either, especially since entering any room consists of just a few steps: 1) Destroy scenery. 2) Kill enemies. 3) Go through opened red door. Rinse, repeat, again and again. It doesn't help that at the start, instead of telling you how to play the game, reams of text flood the screen telling you not only what to do but the history of each item. In the middle of fighting a scythe-wielding robot, a hundred words on the 'advanced data transfer system' present within 'Elixir Skin' is about as welcome as a drunken terrorist sitting next to you on a plane, holding a couple of cobras (not the beer).

The combat system should be what pulls this out of the sludgy WD-40 sloshing around in the toolbox. There's a rudimentary combo system that makes some attacks more effective while others degrade your weapons. It's not always clear which combos are 'good' and which aren't. You end up trying to corner your enemy and then hitting all the buttons in turn. Not particularly scientific, but it seems to do the job. If the game rewarded you by listing combos depending on equipped weapons, then you could build a strategy. As it is though, you find yourself fighting a very shiny robot by smacking buttons in a dingy, crate-filled basement. It's not fun, it's not clever and there's nothing heavenly here. ■ **Henrietta Rowlatt**

> **Any progress made on the map has to be retraced**

The controls have improved but it's dull and very flawed **45%**

Fall of the robots

Has there ever been a good robot game?

Rengoku isn't the only game series to mar the good name of our metal-skulled mates. The movement and character design reminded us of the ill-conceived *Rise Of The Robots*. It was an abysmal beat-'em-up that relied purely on its look to sell copies. And how everyone lapped up the motion capturing and fancy backgrounds, before promptly returning their copy or ritually burning it within a *Wicker Man*-style robotic metal casket. Another terrible robot game was *Robots* based on the film of the same name, 'nuff said.

Dance the light fandango... of swords!

BLADE DANCER: LINEAGE OF LIGHT

OUT: 27 OCT

Publisher **Ignition** / Developer **Hit Maker** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1-4** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN Multi-player**

THE Big QUESTIONS

Another Japanese RPG on PSP? Any good?
It's okay. It has the usual RPG clichés and some rather linear levelling up mechanisms. It seems a bit too structured overall.

But it's got multi-player. Surely that's a bit different for the genre?
Yes, but we had trouble trying to persuade enough people to join in, and then they didn't enjoy it and left us on our own again.

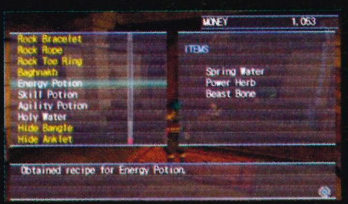
RPGs are usually the easiest games to play - especially when you consider that you don't really have to do much; just sit back, enjoy the story and select Attack every once in a while. So why the hell has it taken us three days to beat the first boss?

From the off, *Blade Dancer* is typical RPG fare: spunky spiky-blue-haired kid goes off to find adventure armed only with his trusty weapon. After a few chats with the locals in the town he's just arrived in, they trust him with a few fetch quests and explain that if he goes off fighting monsters his weapons will break. Weapons shouldn't break in RPGs. That means loads of extra running about getting items to make new ones. But it should be okay as it turns out defeated monsters drop loads of items to make new weapons.

The spunky spiky-blue-haired kid, Lance, uses swords but he doesn't have the know-how to make weapons on his own, so he has to take the swords and stuff he finds to have them appraised at the appraiser's house. This costs money and breaks the weapons into their component parts. Again, it should be okay because the defeated monsters also drop money, and once Lance has the recipe, he can make the weapons himself. However, he can only make them if he has the correct items dropped by the monsters, or if he buys them in the item shops, which are usually located next to the appraiser's house in the town miles away from where his Hunter Sword got snapped in half over the back of a monster he was trying to kill for money, items and experience points.

In the field, Lance is chased by floating skulls that signify the enemies. He gets chased all the time and the skulls pursue him at the same speed he runs, which is pretty slow and really draws out the time it takes to get back to the town to buy more items because the monsters aren't dropping the correct goods to make a simple potion. As per RPG law, each battle won means more experience points and levels can be upped quite quickly if you don't die. The further you get into the field, the harder the enemies become until Lance's life can be ended - miles from his last save point - in a couple of hits. There's no warning that the next group of enemies will send you back in time about half an hour, and this makes you retrace your steps a lot as you level up a small amount before running all the way

It's not long before you learn some more powerful attacks. Each of your party members is aligned to different elements so you have to choose your attacks wisely



Appraising items breaks them. Cool, now you can make items whenever you need to

The locations are stunning and just as you're relaxing in the flower-filled field...

back to a save point just so you're not wasting too much time. In this sense, *Blade Dancer* has the longest refractory period of any RPG we've ever played, because when you die there's no 'just one more go' factor. Even if you do manage to scrape a victory, the fact that the game doesn't pause while you make new items to heal Lance really compounds the frustration, particularly as just before he drinks a potion he's is brought into a new fight to his death.

There are chests to find containing new and exciting weapons, weapons that will increase Lance's attack power by 50 points, which would easily give him an opportunity to kill enemies in one blow. He can't use them though, not until he reaches the required equipment level. Arse! So no doubt you'll find a sword that can't be used until level 30 – when Lance is only on level 13 – and then you'll weep when you realise just how many battles you'll have to win just to use that sword.

[Blade Dancer has the longest refractory period of any RPG]

So *Blade Dancer* is interesting in that it bucks the trend of the battling to story ratio, it's just that by the time you can get on with the story without dying in one hit, you'll have forgotten all about why he's there and who the big bloke fighting alongside him is. You'll also have forgotten where he's going, what he's fighting for and why there's a character called Costner giving him a Forrest Pass. Whatever that does. ■ **Tim Empey**

Tricky start, dull middle and... we won't spoil the end **69%**

...Bah! Dead again. Seriously, you need to fight every little monster you can just to get up to decent levels so you don't have to go back to a save point that's invariably miles away

Make stuff!

Take an empty washing up bottle...

Because your weapons degrade every time you hit something with them, you need to make back-ups or new weapons so you don't end up fighting with just your hands. You have to get your weapons appraised, which not only costs money but also breaks your weapon into its component parts. Thankfully, you're given the recipe to make the weapon that's just been destroyed by over-zealous appraising, but you'll need to have the correct items to craft it. It's a pain when it fails and you lose your precious items.

Hooray, you made a Gladius! Now all you need to do is to not to break the damn thing

Look at this and the last thing on your mind is a long-haired man turning people into cars

There's a power-up that spins you at a right angle without warning. It's very, very annoying

Brother's got soul! Soul what

POCKET RACERS

OUT: NOW

Publisher **Konami** / Developer **In-house** / Price **£29.99** / Players **1-2** / Supports **Wi-Fi Internet Multi-player**

THE Big QUESTIONS

My word! The graphics look awesome!
Nice use of sarcasm. We've been around for too long to fall for that kind of thing. Glitchy, messy, broken...

Okay, okay, the music is amazing!
If cheesy Eastern European trance is your thing, then yes, the music probably does qualify as "amazing".

There's a long-haired man with a strange green apparition behind him, walking towards a grand house in the distance. Inside the house a party's going on, with the main attraction being a girl (mid-20s, slightly drunk, face made of four polygons) nattering away to some guy (don't really care what he looks like). There's a car outside that takes about three minutes to be towed away, then the long-haired man turns up, waves his arms about a bit and turns everyone in the house into small cars.

> **He waves his arms about and turns everyone into small cars**

Normally the sign of a great party, in this case the intro FMV of a very confused miniature car game. We're not sure at what point anyone playing *Micro Machines V4* would have thought, "Hey, this would be even better if it had a storyline about collecting souls!" but that shows what we know. This is just a bad miniature car game dressed up with fancy soul collecting. Completing each race unlocks soul gems, which are needed to unlock further races for more soul gems, for reasons you neither care about nor understand. It's something to do with the long-haired guy who waves his arms about.

Even when you get past the bizarre soul storyline, the underlying game isn't very good. The power-ups can't save *Pocket Racers*, alternating between standard rockets (yawn), car-freeze (yaaawn) and a weird power-up that electrifies the roadside Coke cans for no reason at all (what?). Throw in handling that makes your car every bit as stable and predictable as a crisp packet in a breeze and it's hard to see any reason to persist. Trackside objects have their own physics, which is the kind of thing a developer would say before smugly leaning back in his chair and putting his hands behind his head, but when this means objects get knocked over making seeing the road ahead hard, it's difficult to care.

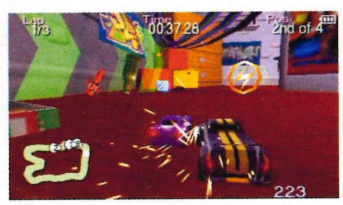
We're not sure at what point PSP became the handheld of choice for average miniature racing games, but unless you're looking for an inspiration to throw the weirdest party ever, just stick with *Micro Machines V4*. ■ **Ryan King**

Please take it away. It burns our soul! **48%**

Double trouble

Because playing it on your own isn't enough

If you find another *Pocket Racer* owner in the UK, then good news! You can have multi-player matches! And watch in horror as the power-up that electrifies Coke cans (what?) still does nothing useful. The balance of the power-ups is out of proportion in single-player – we dread to think how this will be exposed in multi-player sessions – let alone the silence as both players try to ignore the fact that they're embarrassed to be playing *Pocket Racers*. Just get *Micro Machines V4* instead. Please.



It took 17 minutes to get an exciting screenshot. It doesn't seem worth it

Do you really want to start this race? Are you sure?

There are world championships and now even monkeys are getting in on the act!

APE ACADEMY 2

OUT: NOW

Publisher **SCEE** / Developer **Shift** / Price **£24.99** / Players **1-2** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN Multi-player, Game Share**

THE Big QUESTIONS

Is this better than the first game then? Yes, very much so. The controls are better, the scissors, paper, stone is a great lynchpin holding the mini-games together. And it's got more monkeys!

Will it last long? You'll certainly be playing this for longer than you'd think, but it won't last for hours like an enormous sprawling RPG. This is great in one or two-hour burst of play, then you can go off and do something else, like feed a starving stoat.

Scissors paper stone. It's a wonderfully simple game that requires no console, no gadgets and no dice; just a two people each with a hand. Stone blunts scissors, scissors cuts paper and paper covers stone. Hang on... this is where it all goes wrong, how can paper stop a stone from hurting you? If someone knocked you on the head with a stone covered in a piece of paper, it's not exactly going to soften the blow is it? Despite baffling bruised school children throughout history, it remains a fantastic game, so why would you want to play it on a PSP when you have a perfectly good pair of hands?

You might scoff at spending your hard-earned cash on a PSP version of a playground classic, the only difference being the monkeys, and in some way you'd be right, but it's more addictive than mashed banana and just right for short bursts of play on a journey to work. The main game is played using cards and bananas, the more bananas you have the more you can bet. After each battle you'll be jostling for yet more yellow fruit in a *Mario Party*-esque mini-game. Knock your opponent on the head with a Kendo stick, or tackle them in a five-second American football match. It's not always clear what the aim of a mini-game is the first time you play it and we did see quite a few repeats. However, you'll find that you can't put down your PSP because of the action's *Wario Ware* tempo.

[Ape Academy 2 plays like Banzai with cheeky monkeys]

Ape Academy 2 plays like Banzai but with cheeky monkeys. You bet bananas on yourself to win, see what cards your opponent has played before, then watch a manga-style battle to see who wins. The fast pace also means there are tons of battles, mini-games and bosses. As you progress you'll collect better cards, but don't be put off by the card-based nature of the main game, this isn't *Yu-Gi-Oh!* or anything nearly as anal or complex. It's just scissors paper stone with fun mini-games, monkeys and a big dollop of fun. Of course, there's Wi-Fi and game share options, but you can only play this two-player for obvious reasons. All in all this is short sharp fun, and you'll end up playing it for longer than you realise, just don't get hit on the head with a paper-covered rock. ■

Henrietta Rowlatt

Compulsive, brash and funny. A playground classic **85%**

Monkey see, monkey do!

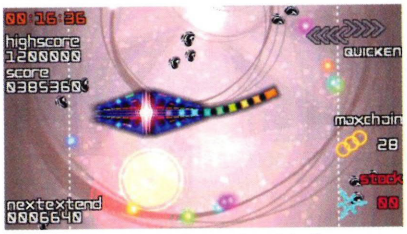
Go ape over familiar faces in Ape Academy 2

Many of the apes in *Ape Academy 2* also make an appearance in *Ape Escape 3* on PlayStation 2. Of course, a lot of the chimps are localised to Europe so you'll see Ricky Ger V, and the familiar boss Blue Monkey along with all their original voices and excitable "eek!" noises. *Ape Escape* fans will certainly get their bananas a little soggy when looking through the extensive Monkeypedia as more cards are unlocked and collected.

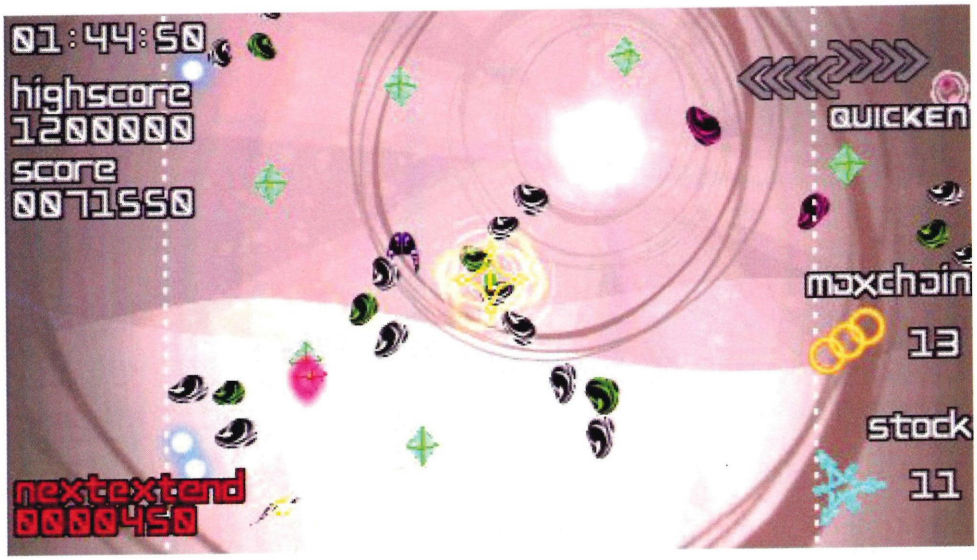
The characters on the cards are all from previous Ape Escape games

It's a monkey in a pink bunny suit doing semaphore...

Only a 13-hit combo? You can do better than that



This boss is so pretty, we almost don't want to kill it. Almost...



Look out, Lumines, you have competition

EVERY EXTEND EXTRA

OUT: NOW (JAPAN)

Publisher **Bandai** / Developer **Q Entertainment** / Price **£29.99** / Players **1-2** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN Multi-player**

THE BIG QUESTIONS

So does it share any similarities to Rez? Definitely, the use of sound may not be quite as inventive, but this is still impressive stuff and will instantly remind you of Mizuguchi's classic Sega title.

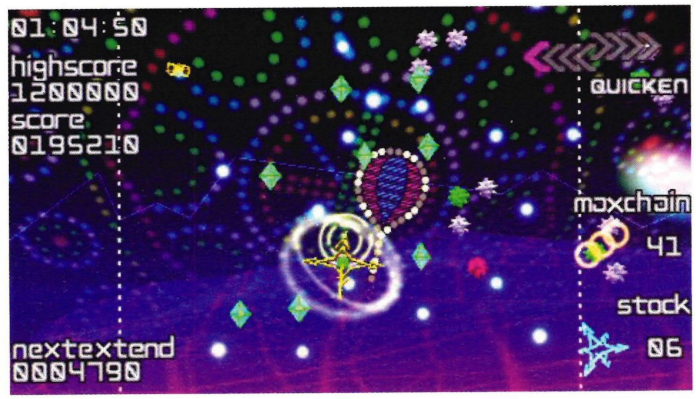
I'm not paying for what's effectively a freeware game... Ah, but E3 is so much more. Mizuguchi may not have created the concept, but his knowing touch and the new gameplay mechanics greatly enhance the experience.

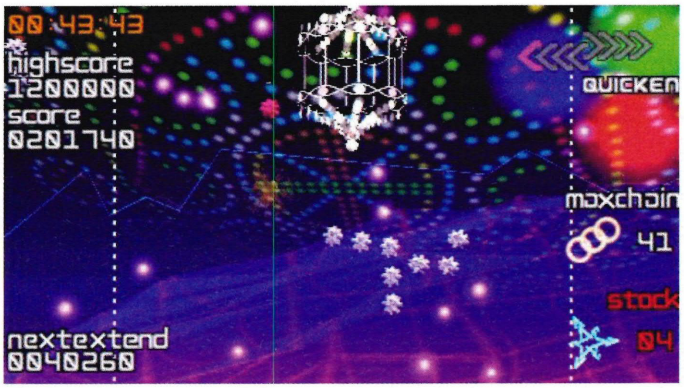
Play Q Entertainment's superb *Every Extend Extra* for five minutes and you'll become immediately fascinated with its entrancing blend of sound and vision – even if you're not sure what's actually happening. Play for half an hour and you'll not only begin to understand how the gameplay mechanics work, but you'll slowly find yourself being utterly captivated by the insane amount of action that's taking place on your PSP's screen. Continue playing for an hour and it's quite possible that you'll never want *Every Extend Extra* to leave your PSP again, it really is that good.

As with Q Entertainment's excellent puzzler *Lumines*, *Every Extend Extra* (hereafter known as *E3*) is a dazzling blend of sound and vision, but unlike *Lumines*, this feels far more suited to the handheld format. Basically an enhanced version of *Every Extend* that first appeared on the PC, famed developer Tetsuya Mizuguchi saw its appeal instantly, and quickly snapped it up for Sony's PSP. Anyone who's played previous Mizuguchi titles such as *Space Channel 5*, the utterly sublime *Rez*, and, of course, *Lumines* will know that the man is a god when it comes to fusing sounds of ethereal beauty to abstract imagery, and *E3* is every bit as good as any previous titles that he's worked on.

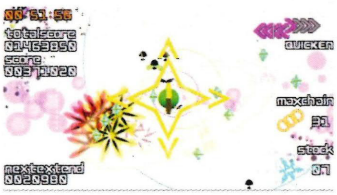
> A frantic counterbalance of deftly dodging obstacles

Unlike *Lumines* and its upcoming sequel, *E3* is Mizuguchi's take on the shoot-'em-up genre and while it takes a little time to get used to everything (you don't actually shoot anything for a start), perseverance reveals its own rewards. Each eye-searing level begins with you piloting a small craft that can self-destruct at the touch of any of the PSP's face buttons. Numerous abstract ships drift lazily across the screen, and the idea is to blow up as many as you can, collecting the crystals that they leave behind. While you only have a limited number of bombs, they can be extended by collecting the green





You can't hear it now obviously, but the music that plays while you're taking down this boss is amazing



diamonds (which grant you bonus points) that are left behind by your kamikaze capers.

Red diamonds quicken the speed of the on-screen debris (and the game's fantastic music scores) while the yellow jewels grant you a further ten seconds of time, allowing your on-screen carnage to continue

[You'll **never** want Every Extend Extra to **leave your PSP**]

until you face-off against the inevitable boss. Care must be taken though, for as the tempo speeds up it becomes increasingly tricky to weave your way through the increasingly overcrowded screen. A touch with any object or shot will rob you of one of your bombs and a precious five seconds of time, so you'll want to use the analogue nub rather than rely on that rather naff D-pad. All collected red gems will also disperse if you get hit, meaning that you need to quickly collect them back up so as to keep the speed of the game and that superb tempo going.

Thus *E3* becomes a frantic counterbalance of deftly dodging obstacles, while simultaneously finding the most suitable moment to lose your next ship, and hopefully rack up a huge amount of points with the chain reaction that follows. It sounds insanely difficult and it is initially – mainly because of that damned D-pad and it's inability to convincingly hit diagonals – but you soon start learning the game's own distinct rhythm and Mizuguchi has added an extra play mechanic that the original freeware game didn't feature – namely the ability to charge up your ship.

While ample progress can be made from just quickly stabbing any of the face buttons (and thus blowing up your ship where it sits) skilled players will soon learn that holding the buttons to charge your ship up will yield far greater opportunities – namely a big bomb. Furthermore, hold down the R button at the same time and your bomb will stay in place (normally it just follows your ship around until it eventually explodes). By releasing the R button your stranded bomb will then begin to follow your craft, meaning that you can soon start pulling off some spectacular combos that will soon see you leaping up the scoreboard. And essentially that's what *E3* is all about. It may feature several game modes, a solid multi-player experience, nine levels and the original PC game, but it shouldn't take experienced players too long to reach the end. The trick is to continually beat your high score, and thanks to its inventive boss battles, superb music, stunning looking visuals and fiendishly addictive gameplay, *Every Extend Extra* will have you coming back for more and more and more time and again. And that's what the greatest games are all about. Looks weird but plays great oh so great. ■

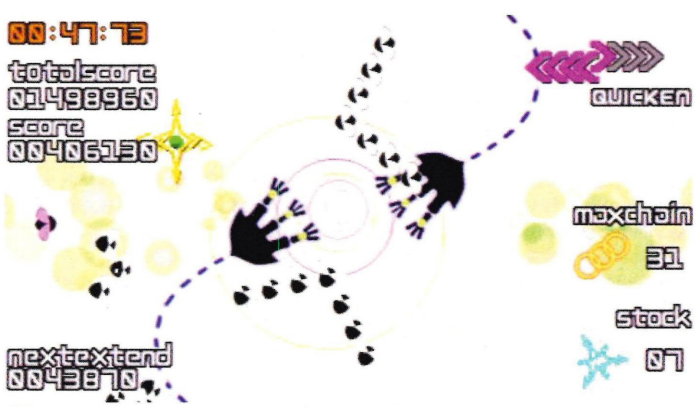
Darran Jones

Who's afraid of the big bad boss? **91%**

Excruciating Extend Extra

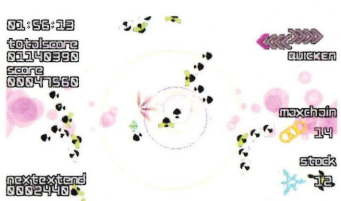
Don't get bossed around

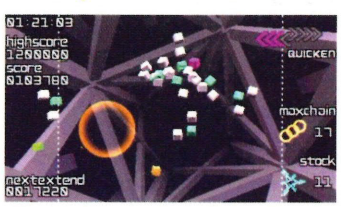
Every Extend Extra's levels may be amazingly surreal, but just wait until you witness some of the bizarre bosses that the game has in store for you. While each and every creation is extremely beautiful to look at, they're insanely difficult to take out and you'll need the reflexes of a hyperactive cat that's been pumped with a skinful of amphetamines in order to reach the next stage. Many of the bosses need a set number of hits or several chained combos, and as the screen fills up with bullets it becomes very tough indeed.



This nasty boss can be a right piece of work to defeat. Wait for a group of bees to come along and give him what for

Believe it or not, this is your ship. Pretty, isn't it?





And here we have the original PC game in all its glory

WIDESCREEN

AARON ASADI REVIEWS THIS MONTH'S HOTTEST UMD RELEASES...

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Your UMD guide at a glance...

★★★★★	Excellent
★★★★	Must Buy
★★★	Average
★★	Fair
★	Don't Bother

UMDs

[82] XMen 3: The Last Stand
[83] Little Britain: Season 3
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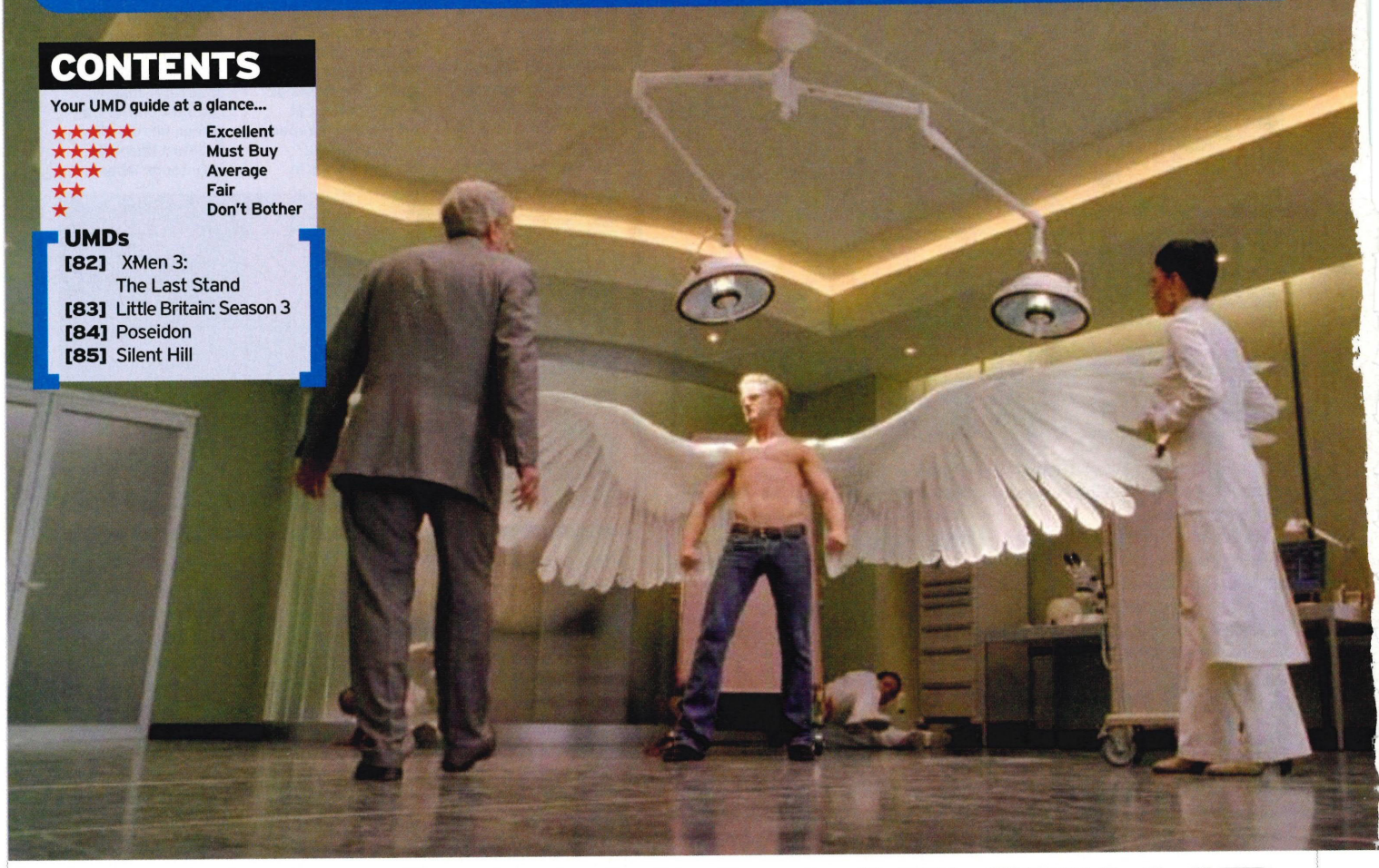
[85] Silent Hill



X-MEN 3: THE LAST STAND

How good can a group be without a Singer?

OUT: 2 OCT

Director: **Brett Ratner** / Starring: **Hugh Jackman, Halle Berry, Patrick Stewart** / Price: **£20.99**

★★

You'll have to give us five minutes – we're too busy basking in the glory of our standfirst to start the review. Seriously, wait. Go away and do something. Actually, why don't you pop off and see *Superman Returns* – it's probably still on somewhere – then come back and see if we're ready to begin. Yeah, do that – that way any assumption you may have that Bryan Singer's an infallible director will be well and truly destroyed, which might make what we've got to say that little bit easier to swallow.

The *X-Men* franchise has, up until now, been a hit with the critics. *Usual Suspects* helmer Bryan Singer was credited with injecting style and intelligence into the burgeoning comic book movie genre, so naturally his absence from the crew on this one was seen as a massive problem. However, some, firmly believing that *X-Men 2* was severely overrated, saw things differently. So far the *X-Men* series had been disappointing, nearly crippled by the weight of its own pretensions and saved only by some excellent casting decisions and a few decent action sequences. It desperately needed to lighten up and have some fun – this was, after all, a story about a team of mutants who go to school to learn more about their powers. It isn't that different from *Harry Potter*.

This time around our heroes are forced to deal with a 'cure' for mutants, the uncontrollable powers of a resurrected Jean Grey and Magneto's inevitable return. It's actually a fair amount of plot for a film that barely fills a hundred minutes, the pacey direction of the newly instated Brett Ratner ensuring that none of the plot strands are ever given time to really evolve (pun not intended to begin with, but we'll claim it anyway). The hurried nature of the proceedings also means that characters can only communicate in the most contrived dialogue imaginable, with sometimes whole scenes going by without anyone speaking in anything other than exposition.

Where this instalment succeeds though, is in its approach to action. Ratner certainly isn't afraid of killing off some of the more central characters and it's an attitude that pays off handsomely for more effects-driven sequences – you're

SHOCK FACT!
While doing publicity for the film, Halle Berry found Radio 1 DJ Chris Moyles a bit racist.

Wolverine was always easy to beat when playing Rock Paper Scissors

never entirely sure who's going to make it, so there's a real edge that you wouldn't find in another comic book movie. The effects themselves are very impressive as well, and the use of superpowers is thoroughly enjoyable. Singer's X-Men always seemed too reluctant to have fun with any of the mutants and as a result set pieces could often feel a bit flat. That's not the case here, with every mutant having their fair share of the movie's big budget.

However, there are grotesque problems with the plot and in truth the film never recovers enough from these to be the enjoyable romp we wanted it to. Shame. ■

SHOCK FACT!
David Walliams raised a million quid for charity when he swam The Channel. That's quite a lot of money.

From the makers of Little Britain: Season 2...

LITTLE BRITAIN: SEASON 3

OUT: NOW

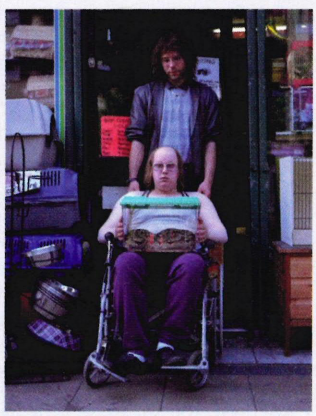
Director: **Various** / Starring: **David Walliams, Matt Lucas, Tom Baker** / Price: **£17.99**

★★★

Not so long ago everyone was watching *The Office* and *Phoenix Nights*. It felt as though we were on the cusp of another great era for British comedy, but as it turned out, that *was* the great era. Since then, comedy in this country has taken a slight turn for the worse. Gervais and Merchant's follow-up to *The Office*, *Extras*, was good but deep in the shadow of Brent, and *Max And Paddy* felt lazy and timid compared to Kay's *Phoenix Nights*. At the same time, programmes like *The Catherine Tate Show* and *The Green Wing* rose to some sort of prominence and helped set the standard for the past couple of years, which was - for the most part - good but never great. Fitting then that *Little Britain* has been the most successful comedy of this period.

The main drawback for us with *Little Britain* is its format. It is merely a sketch show based almost entirely on catchphrase humour. Quite how it garnered so much praise for its originality we don't know - this is the 21st Century equivalent of *The Harry Enfield Show*, full of characters who say the same thing over and over again in various situations. While *Little Britain*'s edgy subject matter, ie depraved social scum, may have given the illusion of something new when it started on BBC 3, its cover is well and truly blown three years on. How many times can you hear "yeah but no but yeah but no but yeah but no" before it starts to lose its charm?

Of course, to argue something isn't great doesn't necessarily mean the same thing as to argue that something is bad. This third season maintains the standard of the first two; its colourful characters are still able to drag a chuckle out of you, Lou and Andy's adventure in front of You Say We Pay is a highlight. The standard of performance between the two leads is typically high as well, and the support is as strong as ever, it's just a case of how funny you find the same joke for a third time. ■



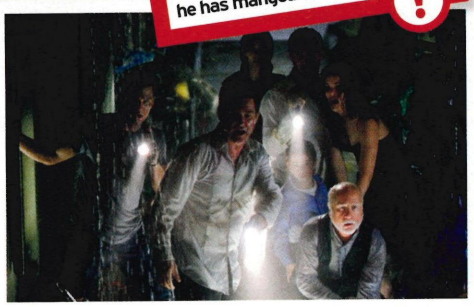
The sequel to *Snakes On A Plane* suffers from budget cuts

They're laydees don't you know, who like to do lady things while looking like ladies

SHOCK FACT! Josh Lucas had a career! Which he has manged to waste.

Another remake? Utter ship

POSEIDON



OUT: NOW

Director: **Wolfgang Petersen** / Starring: **Josh Lucas, Kurt Russell, Richard Dreyfuss** / Price: **£17.99**

★★

Discounting *Little Britain*, this review section is made up of one sequel, one videogame conversion, and one remake. Originality, as far as the modern blockbuster is concerned, seems to have died long ago. Now this wouldn't be as big a problem as it is if the remakes were any good, but more often than not they're worse, and then made doubly awful by being called 're-imaginings' by studios. From a certain perspective this could seem strange – effects are much more convincing now and the resources available to directors and studios are considerably larger than they ever were, so why then are these remakes almost invariably inferior to the originals?

Poseidon goes some way to answering this. There's no doubting the expense, but the CG feels sterile when compared to the gritty effects of the first. No, we're not so pompous as to say that all old effects are superior to modern techniques – they're blatantly not – but sometimes the sheen of CGI makes something as devastating as a cruiser being sunk seem polished, when that's the last thing it should be.

Outside of the effects, there's the problem of plain old direction. You can have all the money in the world, but that doesn't necessarily mean that the unimaginative, seen-it-all-before set pieces are going to feel any less boring. If nothing else, *Posedion* serves as confirmation that Petersen just isn't the action director he used to be (although many of us knew this to be the case after *Troy*). *Poseidon* doesn't have one stand-out sequence in it, with even the ship's destruction paling in comparison to Cameron's *Titanic*.

The depressing matter of star quality is probably best summed up by stating four words (Josh Lucas, Gene Hackman), while the stiff dialogue hasn't stayed long enough in our memory for us to comment on it. Sure, *Poseidon* is certainly not the worst blockbuster of all time as some have made out – there is just enough visual panache and drama to avoid that honour – but equally it falls well short of being the enjoyable disaster movie it should have been. Bloody remakes. ■

The effects obviously improve over the original, but everything else is poor

5 of the best UMDs on the shelves

[1] FIGHT CLUB

Brilliant black comedy that's as cool as hell. Brad Pitt, as the iconic Tyler Durden, has never been better and Ed Norton has rightly conceded that he will never star in a better film. Trudat.

[2] ROBOCOP

Super violent and often misunderstood as nothing more than that, which is a shame. Still, as long as you know that this is Verhoeven's best film and one of the best of the decade as well, that's all that matters.

[3] A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

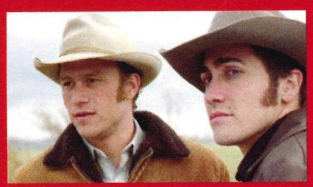
The best comic book movie of all time? Probably. Subdued, measured and powerful, Cronenberg's action thriller/family drama will grip you from start to finish and give us an excuse to use loads of clichés! Unmissable.

[4] KILL BILL: VOLUME 1

A terrific martial arts movie from start to end/middle. Doing what he does best, Tarantino somehow turns what is essentially terrible cinema into a thing of excellence. Wonderful choreography and a central performance from Uma Thurman that should have been good enough for three Oscars.

[5] BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN

Well acted, simply told, stunning to look at and with a score that will send shivers through your ears and out your arse, with *Brokeback Mountain*, Ang Lee has created, first and foremost, a film that ticks all the boxes.



SHOCK FACT!
The first draft of the *Silent Hill* script featured no men in it whatsoever. Unbelievable.

Survival horror comes to PSP... but not like that

SILENT HILL

OUT: NOW

Director: **Christophe Gans** / Starring: **Radha Mitchell, Sean Bean, Laurie Holden** / Price: **£19.99**

★★

What will it take for Hollywood to stop converting decent games into bad films? God alive, this is damn near reaching epidemic proportions. And yet still, there's always that hope that someone will come along and do it properly isn't there? Surely there's a genre out there that agrees with the silver screen. The 2D platformer's chances of box office success were well and truly dashed back in the Nineties when Bob Hoskins played a fat plumber, so it can't be that. *Doom* had a similar effect on FPSs, although it was nowhere near as bad an attempt, and the survival-horror genre was kicked in the balls twice by *Resident Evil*. But hold on – that wasn't really a survival horror was it? The games were, but the films were poor action movies of the lowest order. You would also think that of all the genres, survival-horror might actually make the trip to LA quite easily. Surely the horror template is easy enough to ape? Yes it is, as *Silent Hill* proves, although doing a good job of it is an entirely different matter.

To the film's credit, it keeps the plot straightforward enough. A mother refuses to accept the fact that her daughter is going loco, and so goes to seek out the place she keeps talking about in her nightmares – Silent Hill. Rose, the mum, soon discovers that Silent Hill has been abandoned for 30 years due to a raging fire beneath the town's surface. On her way there, Rose gets involved in a high-speed chase with a cop, which ends in both totalling their vehicles. When Rose awakes, she finds her daughter is no longer with her and that Silent Hill is illuminated by a strange mist. Rose then decides to go looking for her daughter in the deserted town, and ends up bumping into all sorts of ghouls and creatures along the way.

Unfortunately, *Silent Hill* fails in all the crucial areas. A horror film needs to be scary, and this just isn't. It feels far too similar to the plethora of *Dark Water*s and *Ring*s we've suffered recently, offering nothing new at all – something that a horror film just can't afford to do. Audiences have to be unsuspecting, you have to be able to surprise them, and you can't do that by giving them the same over-styled rigmarole they got stung by last Halloween. Following a single woman around by-the-numbers set pieces just aren't scary anymore, and that's all *Silent Hill* is. Another missed opportunity. ■

Radha quickly realised there was nothing silent about this hill

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Cinema Showdown
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Playing Films, Watching Games
7th October
www.bfi.org.uk

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SOLUTION

GANGS OF LONDON

FIND ALL THE HIDDEN STUFF WITH OUR FANTASTIC MAP **P88**

Gangs of London™

Micro Machines V4

Stay on course with our guide to the trickiest tracks

[92]

PLUS

CHEATS & TIPS [96]

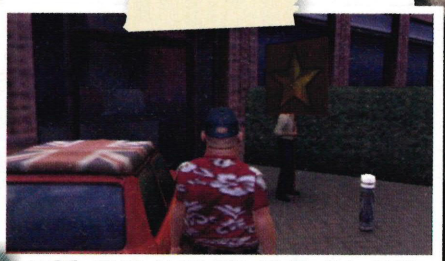
INCLUDING KOLOOMN, ARMORED CORE: FORMULA FRONT, BUST-A-MOVE GHOST, CAPCOM CLASSICS COLLECTION, CARS, AND TENCHU: TIME OF THE ASSASSINS

Gangs of London™

Turn your Jamie Oliver into bona-fide cockney with our comprehensive guide to London's criminal underground

PLACARD PROBLEM

In all the free-roaming modes, a collection of placard-bearing peeps are littered throughout the streets, waiting to be visited. A shiny medal is rewarded to all those persistent enough to find them all. We've marked their locations on the map to make things a little easier.



USE OUR MAP TO FIND ALL THE SECRET PLACARDS

THE KNOWLEDGE

Life is tough ferrying folk around the capital's streets, so we've marked the required destinations for each level of the mini-game on our map. We've also suggested an ideal starting borough, for that perfect line between each of your fares.

LEVEL	DESTINATION SYMBOL	START POINT
One		Waterloo
Two		Borough
Three		Waterloo
Four		Wigmore
Five		Parliament
Six		Soho
Seven		Westminster
Eight		Broadgate

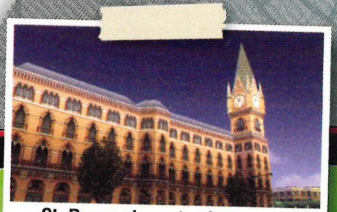
Big Ben isn't the tower's name, it's the bell you know. We were amazed!

LONDON TOURIST

Our fat-necked friend needs a hand getting round our nation's capital and what kind of people would we be if we failed to lend a hand? Remember that as well as his natty union flag-emblazoned mini, our friend can leap into any bus or taxi to get around – simply press ← or → at junctions to turn. Once up close to a landmark, press ◎ to take a photo.

01	BIG BEN
02	PICADILLY CIRCUS
03	LONDON EYE
04	TOWER BRIDGE
05	MARBLE ARCH
06	BUCKINGHAM PALACE
07	WELLINGTON ARCH
08	LONDON PLANETARIUM
09	ST. PANCRAS
10	COVENT GARDEN
11	TRAFALGAR SQUARE
12	THE ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE
13	ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL
14	TATE BRITAIN
15	BRITISH MUSEUM
16	SMITHFIELD MARKET
17	BARBICAN
18	SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL

Buckingham Palace – just one [illegible] and a roundabout...

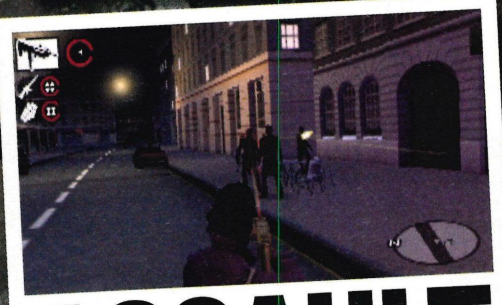


St. Pancras' ornate clock tower made it easy to spot

STORY MODE MISSION TYPE RUN-DOWN

Gangs of London™

Missions in *Gangs Of London*'s Story mode always take one of 15 distinct forms; each of which should be tackled in the exact same manner each time, regardless of difficulty level. The type of each mission can be found in the bottom right-hand corner of the main map screen. This formula remains true whichever gang you choose to play as, too, though the names and faces will obviously change. With this in mind, here are our strategies for tackling each of the 15...



ASSAULT

These missions are always played on foot, and involve breaking into an enemy building to kill one ring leader amongst many foot soldiers. The main thing to bear in mind is that whilst you may feel invincible behind a lumbering great automatic weapon, you aren't, so take your time. When under fire, take cover behind walls, turn to face your enemy whilst still behind cover, then hold down R to lock yourself in a position, weapons drawn, facing the enemy. This way, you can press ← or → to strafe left and right into a firing position before shooting quickly back out again when you've let off a few.

In more open areas, quickly release then re-hold R to cycle between enemies, but continue to circle your target, as this makes you less susceptible to hits. If you do feel the kiss of searing lead, back off and hide somewhere outside the line of fire: your teammates will continue to hold the fort. This obviously applies to your teammates too, so press and hold ◎ to use the tactical menu to order the injured party to remain in certain safe places, when close to death. Also, backing off allows time for your health bar to regenerate, returning to just below the level before you got shot, if you leave it long enough.

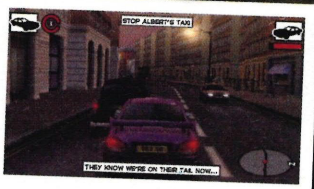
COLLECT

As the name suggests, Collect missions involve, in your gang automobile, picking up vans, personnel and other useful items from various points in the city. Said points are clearly indicated on the map, so getting to them is simply a matter of following the relevant icons. Be as careful as you can not to bump into police cars along the way, in so doing making your task much more difficult; the time limits are generous enough to make doing so unnecessary, anyway.

DEFEND

Defend missions involve the protection of some stronghold or other your gang has set up. Completion brings the reward of further objectives against the gang attacking you. At the start of each Defend mission, look around quickly for obvious vehicular entrances into the space you're in – gates, roads, etc – then plant mines (if you have them to hand) equally across all car-based entrance points. For example, if you're outside a building in the centre of the city, lay charges across the road to the left and right. Next, quickly bolster those defences by parking a few cars alongside the mines (being careful not to commit suicide by running over your own explosives). If it's a hand-to-hand Defend level, be aggressive as the hordes of enemies flow in. Run up to each group and begin attacking them, then just as you begin to be overrun with attacks from all sides, press ◎ to change to another gang member. The CPU-controlled enemies will focus their attacks upon whatever gang member is directly controlled by you, leaving your unwell former combatant to recover somewhat. It's also possible to plant grenades on enemies if you press △ when close, using your grenadier.

CHASE



Chases are relatively simple affairs: bash into the car clearly indicated on your map, observing its health bar to the top right, until it is forced to stop. If you want to keep hold of your speedy gang vehicle, you might consider accelerating level with the target car then pulling left or right, forcing it into oncoming traffic, lampposts and the like. This is not an essential process, as you're at liberty to change cars if you want to. Finally, dropping back then slamming into your target isn't necessarily the most efficient way to cause damage. You can simply remain right up the exhaust pipe of the car in front, taking away pixel after pixel of health. Just drop back a little at junctions, lest you be sent the wrong way.

HQ

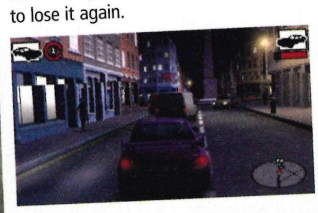
These missions herald the end of each gang, and so are a little more challenging than most. However, this extra difficulty usually takes the form of composite mission types. Some play like Infiltrate objectives up until a pivot point where you suddenly receive armoury and must strafe behind cover to take down opponents. Others involve straight shoot-outs, where similar tactics should be employed. The most useful piece of advice that can be offered here is not to take everything too quickly – the kingpin of the gang, who must be destroyed, will not disappear if you wait behind picking his men off, one by one. Rushing through will usually leave you full of holes, anyway. So peer round corners, dealing with each grunt comprehensively in the usual way before strafing round the final guy, when the time comes. Easy.

KIDNAP

A composite of the Chase and Lose The Tail modes, with a little gun-slinging between. Once you've hit the target car one time it'll speed off into the distance. At this point, it's again best to hit your target just after every corner and hang back on approaches to bends to allow yourself time to see where they're going to dart. When your target car stops, you'll see the person you've been sent to kidnap fly off down the street. Ignore them for the time being, taking out the armed gang members formally inside the car. You don't want to claim a hostage in the line of fire. Once they're dead, use the map to shoot after them, pressing △ to grab them when close. Now, you can let go and they'll follow you. Returning to the car, the same old rules apply: only taking corners softer than right-angles, never lifting your foot off the accelerator and (ideally) waiting until you've lost the police to arrive at the safe house.

HIJACK

Similar to the Chase missions, in that your task is to first ram a chased vehicle off the road, using the same type of health bar system previously encountered. When it's nearly destroyed, the occupants will leap out and start firing. Use your own car as cover, and again keep momentarily releasing then holding R whilst moving to take down enemies quickly and safely. When they're all dead, simply drive your new vehicle to a point indicated on the map. Take this third element of your task at a steady pace: you don't want to accidentally knock a police car and have to lose it again.



INFILTRATE

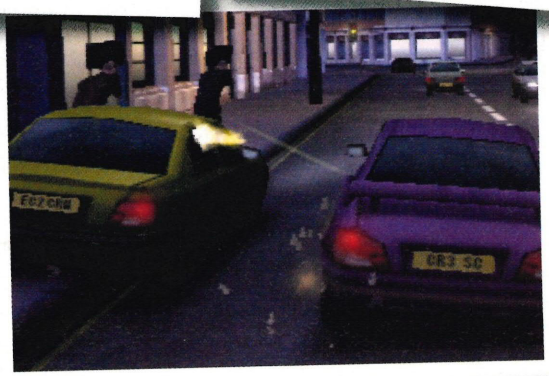
Being seen is absolute suicide in this stealthy game mode. At every corner or doorway, move left or right slightly to manipulate the camera into giving you a sneak peek of the following area. Guards will take the same path each time, stopping in two places to take a look around. So, wait for them to move then follow behind them (remembering to tap ○ to duck, otherwise your footsteps can be heard). Once the guards stand still, creep up behind until the stance of your character changes, then press ⊗ to initiate a speed-kill. You don't have to be right up the backside of your victim to take them out, just two or three paces away. If you get caught, try to move as little as possible whilst tapping □ to slash your weapon, although in some of the later missions your enemies will be armed so heavily you'll stand little chance of survival, so lay low.

RACE

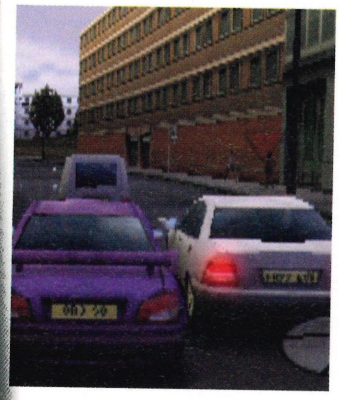
The simplest mission type of all – a regular street race, following the course depicted on the in-game map. The goal is obviously to finish in first place. Handling is somewhat basic – the cars grip the road very strongly so drifting is out of the question. Just making sure you accelerate at all times and never taking sharper turns than right-angled ones will be enough to see you take the chequered flag. A final piece of advice would be not to ram any cars, including your opponents, at any cost, as you'll find yourself slowed to a crawl if you do.

LOSE THE TAIL

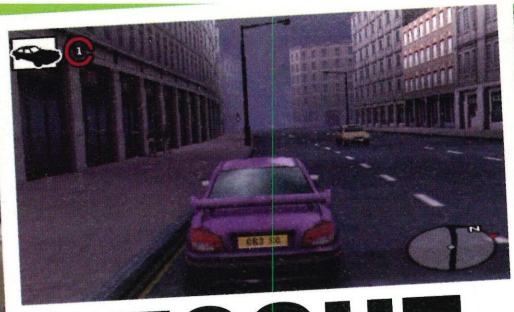
As the name suggests, this mode challenges you to lose a rather persistent tailing car. As elsewhere, start off at a moderate pace, attempting to push the car behind into oncoming traffic. Wait until you can just see your pursuer in the bottom right or left-hand corner of the screen before you start doing this. Once you pull it off, accelerate immediately. This will give you a short head-start for the chase proper, in which you must continue to hold ⊗ at all times, taking (again) 90 degrees-or-less corners. You shouldn't need to slow down if you do this, making the evasion process a cinch. If you're about to crash though, you might consider tapping R to power-slide, though this will make you lose speed. Once you lose the tail, drive sedately to the point indicated on the map. Don't make your job any harder by crashing into police cars, as you do.



SABOTAGE



Sabotage missions are another composite, consisting of what is essentially a Chase mission only with stationary cars and a few members of the thin blue line in tow. One mission, for example, sees you taking out a number of parked getaway cars. Whilst in your vehicle, follow the map to reach the correct position, then destroy the parked getaway cars using (ideally) your own vehicle or (when it gets knackered) your melee weapon. When the police show up, hop back into a car. You'll still have trouble attaining the speed necessary to mow them down, but at least you won't then be surrounded by attackers. When the cars are a smouldering heap, your task is done. Other Sabotage missions run similarly to chase or kidnap missions.

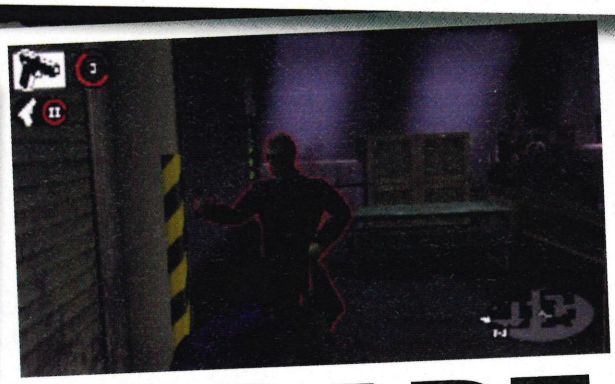


RESCUE

Rescue missions open in a vehicle, as you drive to some point in the city where an attack is currently taking place on some stranded gang members. Once there, it's important to bear in mind that you can continue to hop in and out of vehicles. Therefore, try to use the vehicles as weapons against your ground-based foes for as long as possible, running your opponents over, and so on. If enemy firepower starts to reduce your vehicles to a flaming mess before you've even put the pedal down, hop out and use the regular strafing/tapping and holding R technique to evade enemy fire and deal a little back. Once all enemies are dead, the mission will end.

DELIVER

Generally, this type of mission involves you simply driving to an area of the city marked on the map, under chase from one or more opponent cars. If this is the case, you have one important thing to remember: when being chased, it's imperative that you remain at top speed at all times. When approaching a corner you intend to dash into, make sure it's no more severe than a right angle. This way, you can continue to accelerate as you drive through it. Taking a couple of similar corners in quick succession is normally enough to shake your opponents off. Occasionally, you'll be delivering a person. If this is the case, a crash will cause them to hop out of the vehicle and begin raining down bullets on the opposition. With plenty of enemies lurking, you don't want that to happen, so in these missions slowing down in cramped, heavily-populated streets is a good idea. Here, use the traffic to slow down your followers instead.

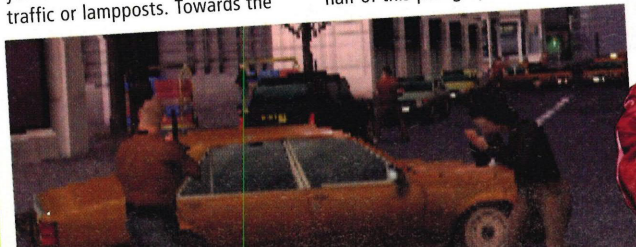


ESCAPE

Another on-foot variety of mission, Escape challenges you to release yourself from incarceration, unharmed. It's essentially an Infiltrate mission, only this time you're accompanied by a teammate. With this in mind, hang back for just a fraction of a second each time you encounter an enemy, allowing them to lay the smack down on your other half for a second. Once they're doing this, jog behind them and stick the boot in. Whilst you're hardly going to escape without any cuts and bruises, you'll sustain the least possible damage this way. As ever, if you've been severely beaten, hang back in a safe area for a few seconds to allow your health to replenish.

PROTECT

Another often car-based mission, this one. When on the road, the CPU drivers won't overtake the car you're protecting, so hang back ten yards or so behind its rear bumper. Constantly remaining in this position will be enough to see you through most of the missions. When you fall behind, simply ram your opponents from the side to re-assume your tailing position. All the better if you can ram them into oncoming traffic or lampposts. Towards the end of the mission, your charge will stop and be fired upon by rival gang members who will also vacate their vehicles. As in other on-foot missions hold, quickly release then re-hold R to cycle between targets whilst strafing left and right quickly. Doing this will ensure you won't get hit, and can take down targeted enemies with consummate ease. Sometimes protect missions will begin on foot. If so, you'll only need half of this paragraph!



Micro Machines V4

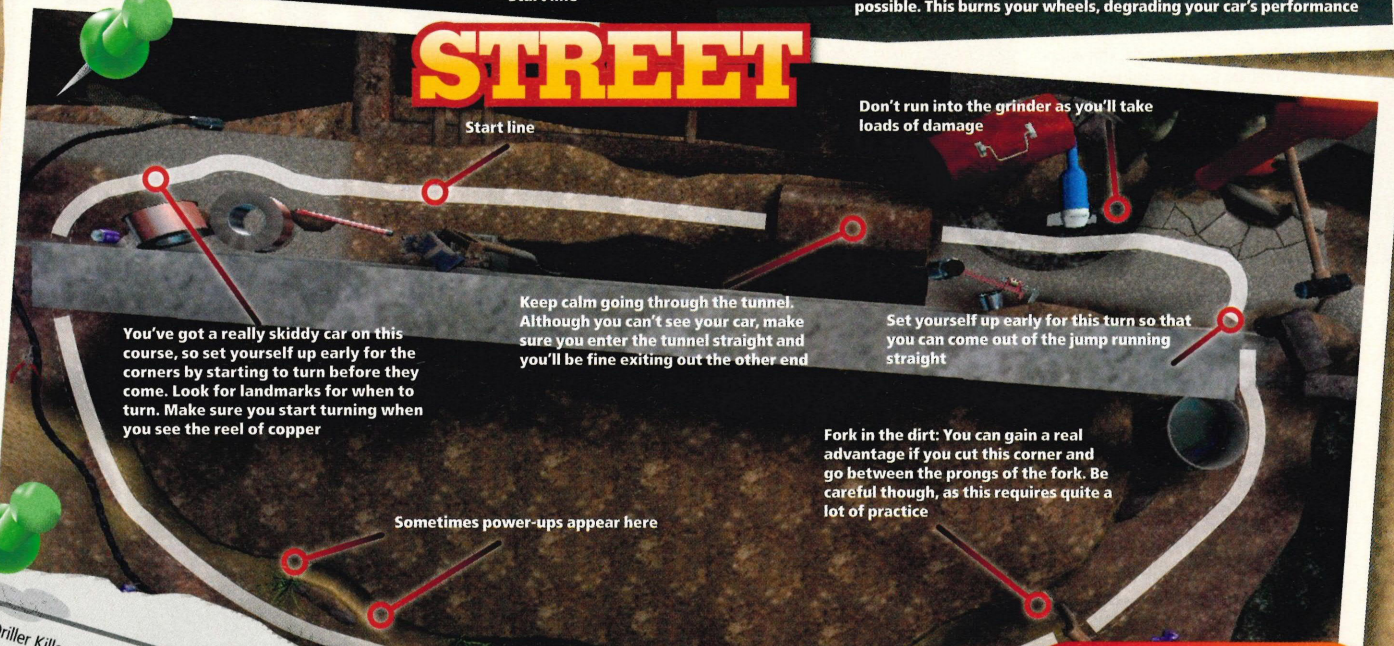
All those tricky cornflake sodden tracks and hair-pin turns cracked in this miniscule masterpiece

FAST FOOD

Fast Food Flyover/Burger Bother: As you will have noticed, it is impossible to not be damaged when driving over the burger fryer; you can use this to your advantage by firing a weapon at an opponent whilst they are on the fryer and causing them extra damage. Also, if possible, try to nudge your opponent behind one of the burgers; if they get stuck here they will take a considerable amount of damage.

Lastly try to pick up the health power-ups where possible, this will help you to keep on top of the health of your vehicle.

STREET



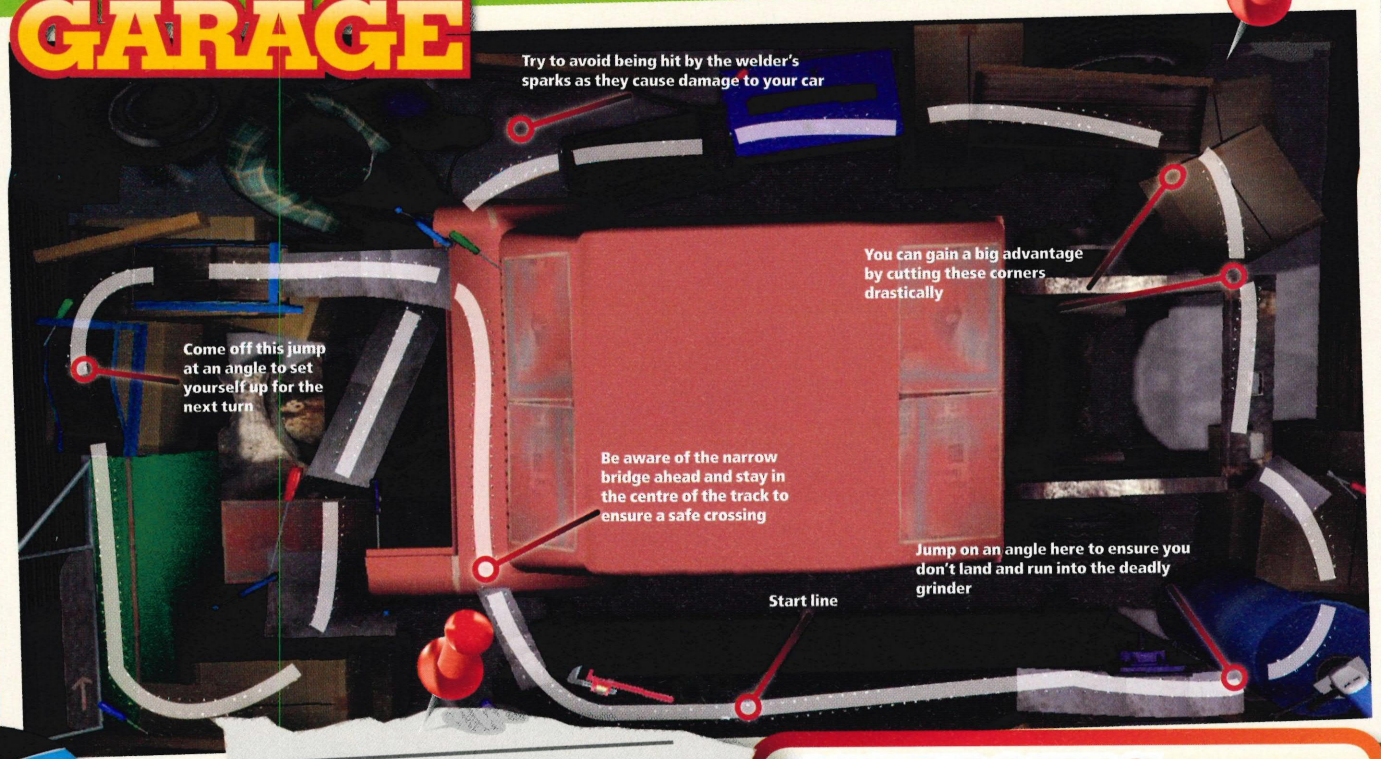
Driller Killer: This track is a little tricky as the cars will skid on the loose gravel surface. The hardest part of this track is the sharp turn before the workman who is drilling the road. Try to brake for this and take it as close to the sledgehammer on the top of the drop as you can. This should lead to you landing on the left of the track, and give you the opportunity to bash your opponents into the drill.

If you have a machine-gun on this track, the best place to use this is to wait until your opponent is just about to take the drop next to the workman, then fire at them. This should send them flying far off the ledge, and give you an easy point.

SHOCKER

This is probably the best and most versatile weapon in the game. Always try to collect these before picking up a x2 power-up and then use them against your opponents. This power-up is particularly effective on corners as it will often push the enemy cars off the track. When leading any race, this is the best weapon to have as it will soon deter anyone from trying to overtake you.

GARAGE

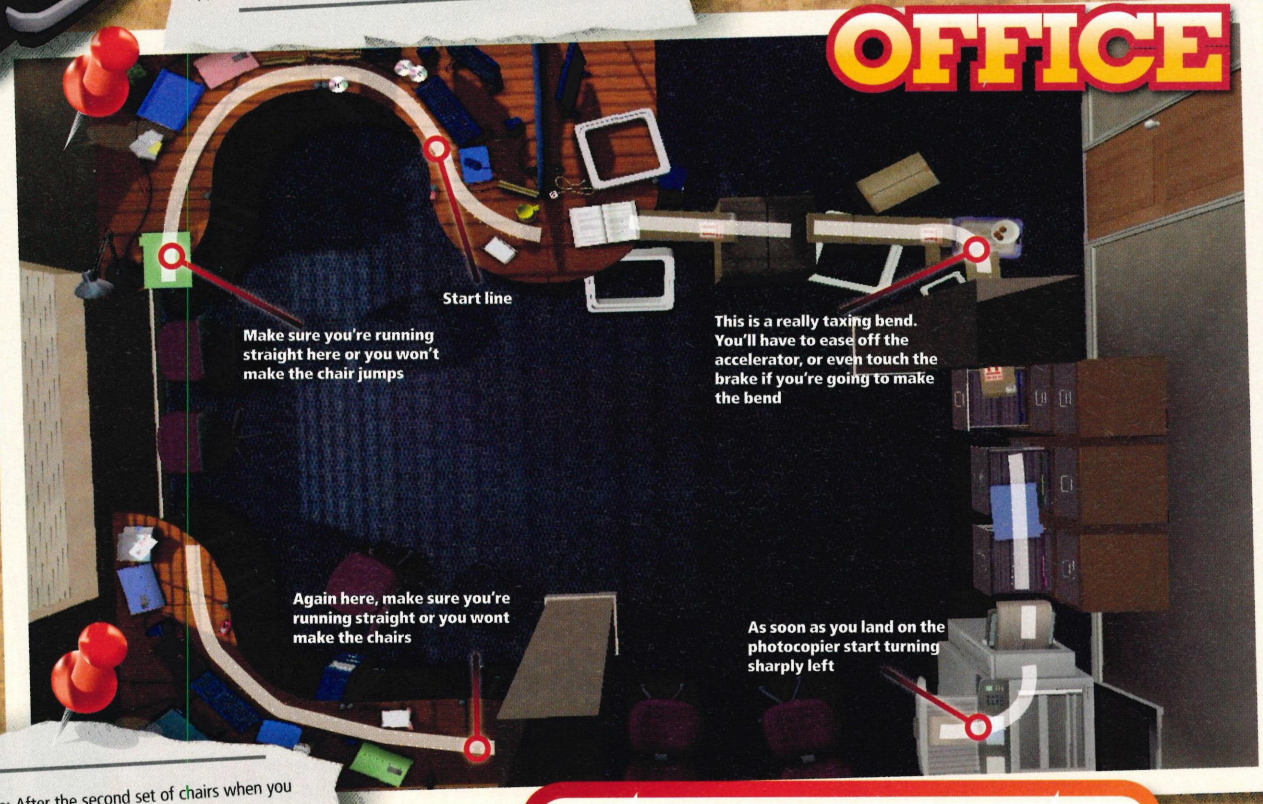


Garage Games:
As soon as you come off the first slope start to turn left, this way when you land you'll miss the grinder and take the corner smoothly. On the tool box section leading to the garage floor you can cut all of the corners, gaining you some good ground before you start to climb the ramp. Try to keep a Sonic Boom weapon stored up as there are several places on this track where you can force the opponents off the course or into damage causing objects.

DICE BOMBS

In a race or battle, fire these so that they land in an obvious place, like a narrow piece of track or the corner of an apex. Just remember where they are so you can avoid them on the next lap.

OFFICE



Office Outrage: After the second set of chairs when you land on the photocopier, make sure you turn as soon as you land. This will allow you to cut the corner and accelerate away from your opponents.

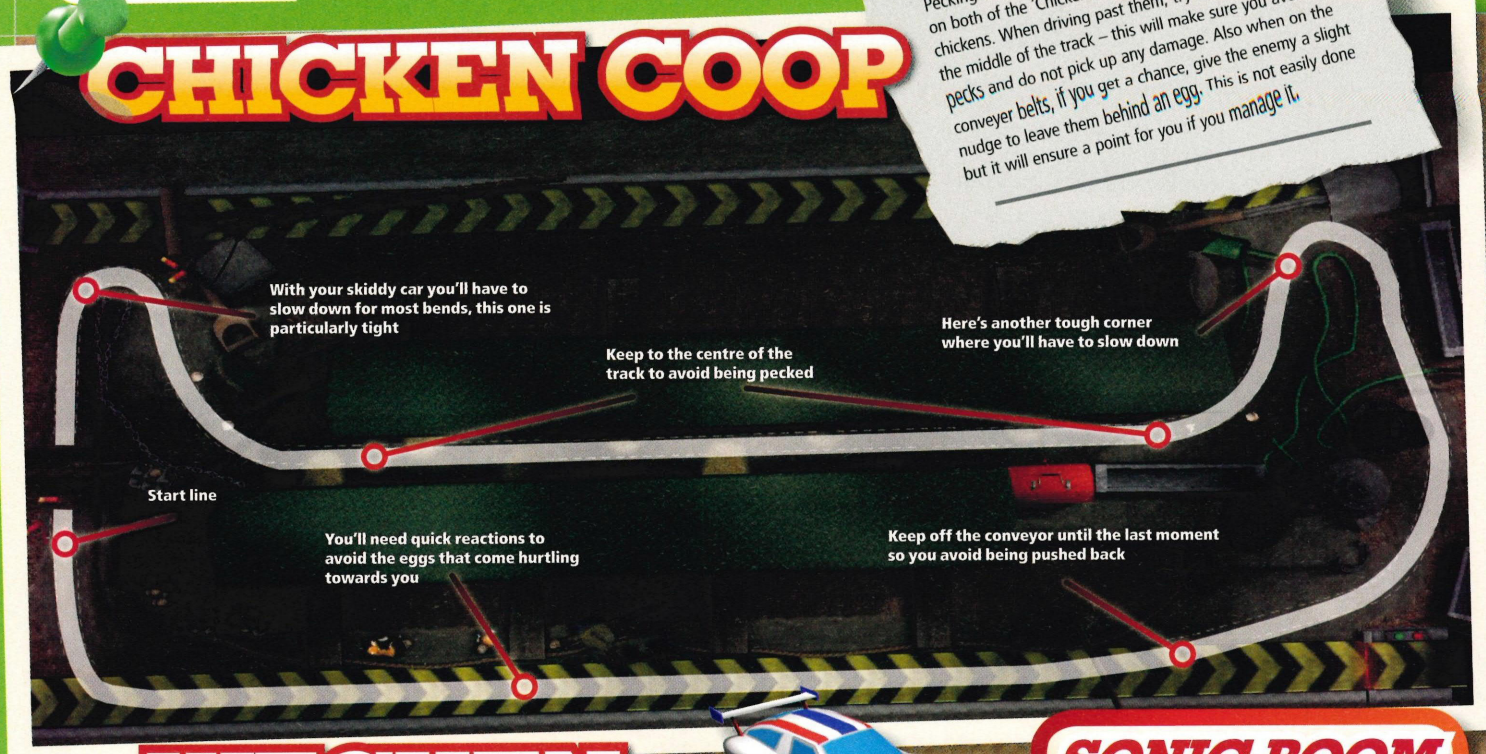
Also, watch out for the sharp left turn on the biscuit tray, but other than this you can pretty much go full speed throughout the track. Note that good driving will equal more points to spend on upgrades.

HARDER THEY FALL

During any battle you will lose points when you fall off, unless you fall off at the same time as another opponent. If you're about to fall off the track, or be pushed off, try and take someone else with you.

CHICKEN COOP

Pecking Peril/Chicken Chase-Back: It goes without saying on both of the 'Chicken Coop' tracks you need to avoid the chickens. When driving past them, try to stay straight down the middle of the track – this will make sure you avoid their pecks and do not pick up any damage. Also when on the conveyer belts, if you get a chance, give the enemy a slight nudge to leave them behind an egg. This is not easily done but it will ensure a point for you if you manage it.



KITCHEN

SONIC BOOM

If you have this weapon at the start of a race or restart point, you can fire it and severely damage all of your opponents straight away as these are best used at point blank range.

Pedal Bin Pile-Up: Don't bother jumping off the cheese ramp to cut the corner, as it wont save you any time. Instead, turn early for the jump onto the ironing board and partially cut the corner. It is also possible to cut the final corner slightly as you go up the baking tray, giving you a slight advantage.

PLASMA CANNON

This is another highly effective weapon. It's best used in rapid bursts (there isn't a lot of point in charging it), particularly when in close range behind more than one enemy. Fired in this way you should be able to almost completely destroy a single opponent.

SCIENCE

RAMMING

On tracks where there are fatal drops off of the track, try and set your car up in a position where you car ram an opponent off when they slow down during, or approaching a corner.

Science Speedway: If you want to gain a slight advantage over your opponents early on the track, you can cut the corner next to the overhead projector. Once you land, instead of hitting the ramp to jump onto the sink, drive around the right hand side. The most effective place to gain an easy point on this track is when driving through the Bunsen burner section. Attempt to nudge and trap one of your opponents behind one of the burners. They will be stuck leaving you free to drive on and win a point.

WOODWORK

Wood Workout: On the third corner, stick to the left hand side of the track and drive along the ledge. This will stop you having to worry about all the gaps in the track and will also give you easy access to the power-up.

When driving along the sandpaper, if you turn your car 90 degrees to the right, you will get a huge speed boost and will land perfectly to go round the next corner and also gain a point.

MACHINE-GUN

Although not hugely powerful for damaging an opponent, the machine gun does knock an enemy forwards. Try and hit an opponent in front of you when they are about to turn a corner and they should overshoot and fall off the track.

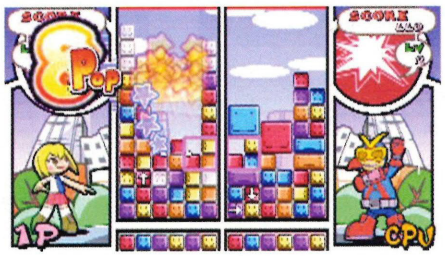
Beat the world, but don't tell them how you did it...

CHEATS & TIPS

KOLOOMN

Unlock Puzzle Challenge

To unlock Puzzle Challenge mode, simply complete all five tutorial levels.



ARMORED CORE: FORMULA FRONT

Tricks and unlockables

Press the following during a manually-controlled battle to execute the corresponding tricks:

Code	Outcome
→ + ↑	Drop extensions
↑ + ◎	Drop left arm weapon
↑ + □	Drop right arm weapon
Boost forward + ◎	Fire energy wave

Achieve the following to unlock the corresponding features:

Unlockable	How to unlock
50 exhibition matches	Beat Formula Regular league
Ending Credits	Beat all 50 exhibition matches

BUST-A-MOVE GHOST

Extra characters and drop patterns

Achieve the following statuses to unlock these goodies:

Unlockable	How to unlock
Character 'Doggie'	Beat Vs CPU, Classic Puzzle mode
Character 'Brave'	Beat Vs CPU, Ghost Puzzle mode
Character 'Maggie'	Finish all 300 levels of single-player Classic mode
Drop patterns level 2	Beat Vs CPU, Blind mode with each character

CAPCOM CLASSICS COLLECTION

Unlockable art

Getting past a certain stage in each and every retro classic will unlock a selection of artwork. Here's how to do it:

Unlockable	How to unlock
1941	Defeat the Stage 4 boss, Krote
Avengers	Clear Stage 4 and rescue the girl
Bionic Commando	Get over 25,000 points
Black Tiger	Defeat the Stage 3 boss
Block Block	Complete an extended bonus
Captain Commando	Defeat Dr TW at the end of Stage 5
Final Fight	Pick up Eddie E's Bubble Gum
Forgotten Worlds	Complete 3 stages
Last Duel	Get over 100,000 points
Legendary Wings	Find a Lucky! hidden area
Magic Sword	Reach level 20 of the tower
Mega Twins	Reach Monster Castle
Quiz & Dragons	Get over 200,000 points
Section Z	Complete Section E
Side Arms	Defeat the Stage 3 boss
Street Fighter	Journey to Thailand
Strider	Defeat Captain Beard Jr in Stage 3
The Speed Rumbler	Clear Stage 3, Stone Hill
Three Wonders	Finish one of the three games
Varth	Destroy the Steel Golem in Stage 15

You can also unlock a handy set of tips for each of the arcade titles too, simply by achieving the following feats:

Unlockable	How to unlock
1941	Get over 500,000 points
Avengers	Get over 20,000 points
Bionic Commando	Clear Stage 1
Black Tiger	Get over 25,000 points
Block Block	Complete the beginner course
Captain Commando	Get over 30,000 points
Final Fight	Play as all three characters
Forgotten Worlds	Get over 15,000 points
Last Duel	Get over 50,000 points
Legendary Wings	Get over 30,000 points
Magic Sword	Get over 120,000 points
Mega Twins	Get over 15,000 points
Quiz & Dragons	Enter the Flatfield from Stage 2
Section Z	Get over 70,000 points
Side Arms	Get over 200,000 points
Street Fighter	Get over 60,000 points
Strider	Get the Terapodal Robopanther
The Speed Rumbler	Get over 20,000 points
Three Wonders	Play all three games at least once
Varth	Get over 250,000 points

CARS

Various unlockable bonuses

To unlock the Bonus Speedway Reversed track, hold down L2 whilst pressing ⊗, □, △, ⊗, △, □ at the main menu screen.

To unlock alternate paint jobs for each car, simply beat the best time on the corresponding track. There are three paint jobs per car, and you will need to beat the best time three times to receive them all.

Paint job character	Track
Chick	Speedway
DJ	Radiator Cap Run
Doc Hudson	Mesa Ravine
Lightning McQueen	Figure 8
Luigi	Diesel Forest
Mater	Desert Canyon Dash
Sally Carrera	Radiator Springs
Sarge	Frank's Field
Sheriff	Ironhorse Junction
Snot Rod	Turbine Canyon
Wingo	Interstate

You can unlock certain character cars as you progress through the game. This is how to do it:

Unlockable	How to unlock
Doc Hudson	Beat Gran Prix Cup 1
Ramone	Beat Mirror Cup
Sheriff	Beat Gran Prix Cup 2
Unlock Flo	Beat Gran Prix Cup 3

To unlock the boss cars DJ, Snot Rod, Wingo, Boost and Chick, best them in their specific races in Story mode. To unlock the mirror cup, collect all of the postcards in the Postcard Rally races in Story mode.

TENCHU: TIME OF THE ASSASSINS

Unlockable characters

It's possible to unlock a raft of characters by completing various objectives in-game. This is how it's done:

Unlockable	How to unlock
Bear	Finish Onikage Story mode
Echigoya	Beat special mission 'Tenchu'
Jinnai	Beat Tesshu Story mode
Jonosuke	Finish Ayame Story mode
Juzo	Beat Rin Story mode
Kenpo Bozo	Beat Rikimaru, Ayame, Rin and Tesshu Story modes
Kunoichi	Complete Rikimaru, Ayame, Rin and Tesshu Story modes
Kuroya Jo-Kunoichi	Beat Rikimaru, Ayame, Rin and Tesshu Story modes
Kuroya Jonin	Complete Rikimaru, Ayame, Rin and Tesshu Story modes
Merchant	Beat special mission 'Tenchu'
Mifuyu	Finish Ayame Story mode
Monk	Beat Rikimaru, Ayame, Rin and Tesshu Story modes
Mr D	Beat special mission 'Illusion'
Ninja	Beat Rikimaru, Ayame, Rin and Tesshu Story modes
Ninja dog	Complete Onikage Story mode
Onikage	Beat Rikimaru, Ayame, Rin and Tesshu Story modes
Policeman	End special mission 'Illusion'
Ranzo	Beat Rikimaru, Ayame, Rin and Tesshu Story modes
Ronin	Beat Rikimaru, Ayame, Rin and Tesshu Story modes
Salary-man samurai	Beat special mission 'Illusion'
Samurai	Finish Rikimaru, Ayame, Rin and Tesshu Story modes
Shimatsuya doctor	Beat Rikimaru, Ayame, Rin and Tesshu Story modes
Shimatsuya female	Complete Rikimaru, Ayame, Rin and Tesshu Story modes
Shimatsuya samurai	Beat Rikimaru, Ayame, Rin and Tesshu Story modes
Shimatsuya villager	Beat Rikimaru, Ayame, Rin and Tesshu Story modes
Shinogi	Beat Tesshu Story mode
Sho	Beat Rikimaru, Ayame, Rin and Tesshu Story modes
Tajima Eigoro	Finish Rin Story mode
Tatsumaru	Beat Rikimaru Story mode

CONNECT

GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR PLAYSTATION PORTABLE

PSPMASTER [98]

Master System emulator revealed

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EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT... PSPMASTER

Console history

The story of Sega's Master System, as always, begins in Japan. Sega's first console was known as the SG-1000 and it was released in 1983. While it never sold enough systems to give Nintendo's NES any real problems, the machine sold well enough for Sega to create a sequel. And so the SG-1000 Mark II appeared, an improved, updated release that enabled you to plug in a SK-1100 keyboard by way of a handy connector that also complemented Sega's new home computer, the SC-3000. As well as having the ability to play games and applications that ran on the SC-3000, it was unable to deal with any of the machines Music or Basic cartridges. Its final addition was a nifty Card Catcher that enabled it to play specific games.

In October 1985, the SG-1000 went through one final transition and the Mark III received a suitable RAM and graphical upgrade to enable Sega to compete against Nintendo's NES. It was also backwards compatible with previous SG-1000 games, therefore beating Sony to the punch by a good nine years.

In 1986 Sega decided it was time to enter the Western market and the newly renamed Master System appeared in the US in June 1986. Apart from an improved sound chip, the machine was more or less identical to the SG-1000 Mark III and it featured both the cartridge and card slots. The UK launch (and a second Japanese model) arrived in 1987, and while the machine had plenty of Sega arcade hits and original titles, it couldn't possibly compete with the incredible stranglehold that Nintendo had on the market.

Please check your firmware version before attempting to run any homebrew applications. You will need 1.5 or a downgrader to run PSPMASTER.

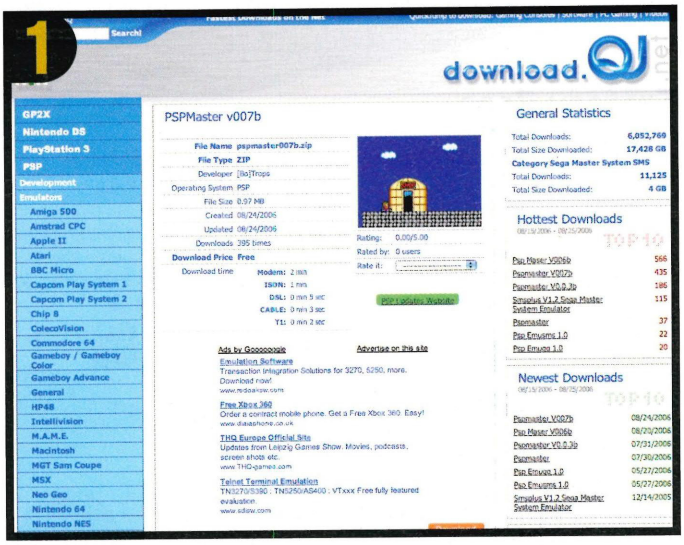
The original Master System was a bit of an ugly beast

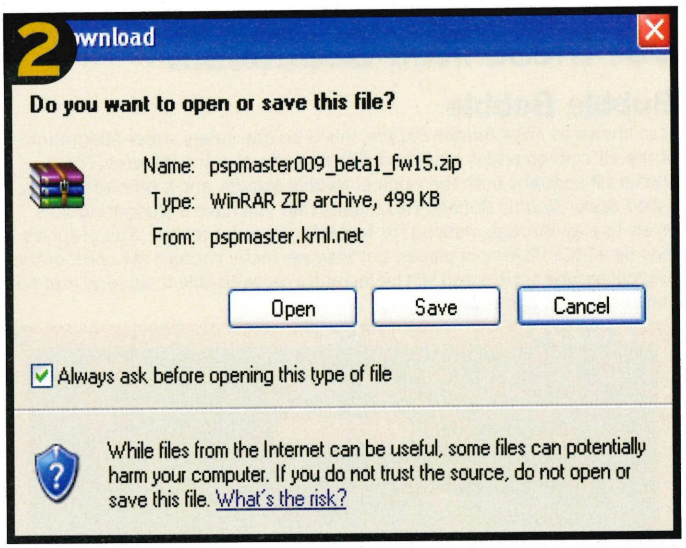
Indeed, when the Master System was first released in the US, Sega managed to sell 125,000 consoles in the first four months – a fairly impressive figure until you realise that the NES had managed a staggering 2 million units in the same period.

Sega carried on with the machine though, and thanks to the success of Sega's 16-bit Mega Drive it decided to create a newer sleeker model, the Sega Master System II, which among other things, was missing the original model's reset button and card slot, but came with a built-in version of *Alex Kidd* (and eventually, *Sonic The Hedgehog*).

While the Master System was never a success in either Japan or the US, it was quite a different story in Europe and Brazil. In fact, Sega kept on producing the machine in Europe until 1996, nearly ten years after the machine was first released. As for Brazil, well, it was huge – Sega even released a wireless version – but there's far too much to cover here now. Another time perhaps... ■

Setting up the emulator in five easy steps...



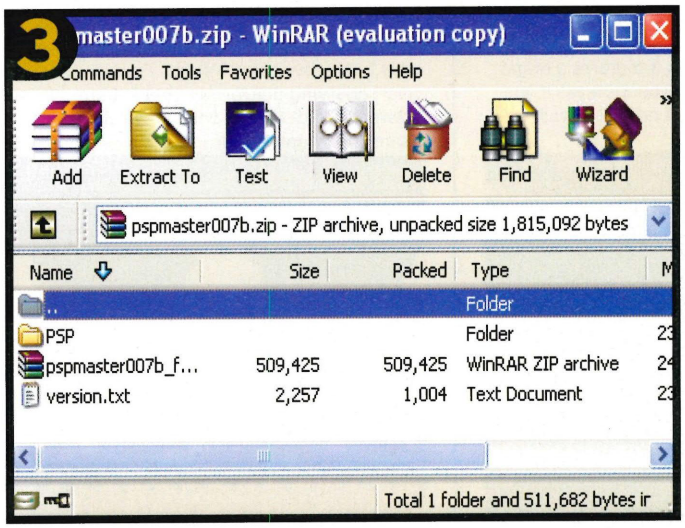


So, Connect has been kind enough to teach you a little bit about Sega's 8-bit console, how would you like to see what it was actually capable of? Join us as we walk you through five simple steps to emulation perfection. You won't need to do anything more than just follow a few simple pointers. Once you have, you'll be able to play Master System games quicker than you can say "they're much more colourful than the NES versions."

Okay then, so we have got the annoying blurb out of the way, so you're now going to have to search the Internet for a suitable gaming site that will enable you to download the required emulator (PSPMaster is the one you're after. As always, head on over to the rather funky PSP Updates and mosey on over to the Master System emulator section at http://dl.qj.net/PSPMaster-v007b-PSP-Emulators/pg/12/fid/9580/catid/134 **(Step 1)**.

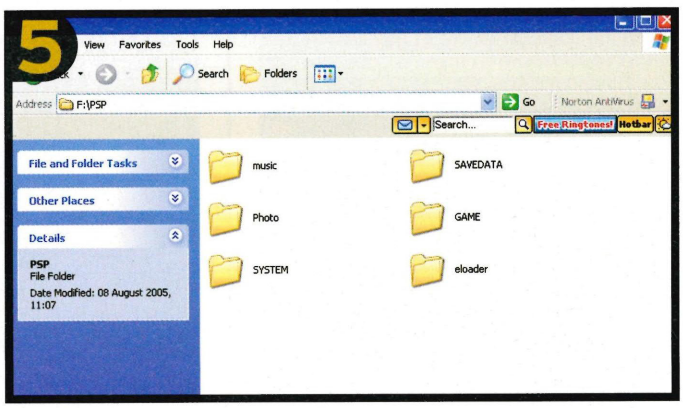
The emulator we're currently using is PSPMaster v007b. The main reason for this is a) it's a bloody good little emulator with great support, and b) it's compatible with Fanjita's excellent *GTA* eBoot Loader, so most of our readers will be able to use it.

Save the required file to your desktop **(Step 2)** and then open it up with a program such as WinZip. Ignore the second zipped PSPMaster file and simply extract the folder called PSP **(Step 3)**. Time for the science bit...



Connect your PSP to your PC via a suitable USB cable and open up your PSP's details via My Computer. Now open the PSP folder that is on your desktop, as well as the one on your PSP **(Step 4)**. Okay, now that you've done that, in the PSP folder that's on your desktop you'll fine two folder called PSPM1~1% and PSPM1 **(Step 5)**. Transfer these two folders over to your PSP Game file and you're almost done.

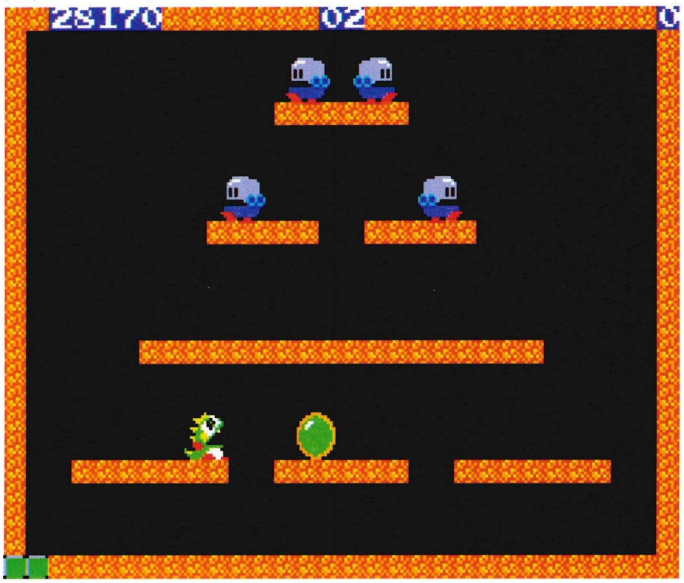
All you need to do now is get hold of any legal ROMs you own and place them in PSPM1 and there you have it. A brand new Master System emulator running on your PSP. Just remember that we're not going to tell you where to download ROMS, as it's highly illegal, and you'll be judged severely at the Pearly Gates. ■



So your emulator is up and running, but what games should you pick up? Check out these little beauties...

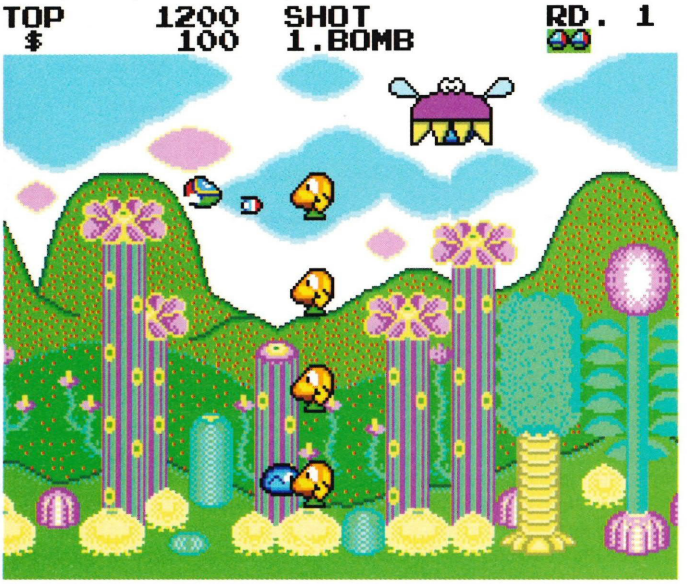
Bubble Bobble

Also known as *Final Bubble Bobble*, this is an absolutely super adaptation of the hit coin-op and is crammed with all sorts of extra features. For starters it contains both the original *Bubble Bobble*, and a refined version, called *Super Bubble Bobble*. This means that you have a staggering 200 levels to play through, making for fantastic value for money. The graphics may be a little flickery in places, but they perfectly capture the spirit of the original arcade sprites and will be instantly recognisable to anyone that has played the first game. ■



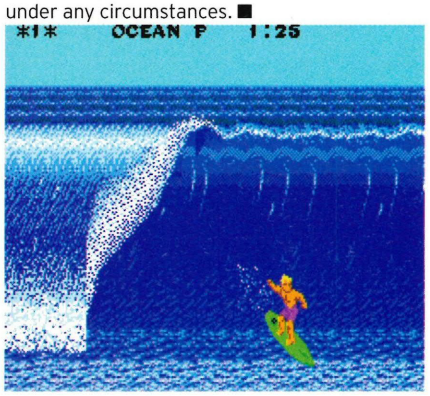
Fantasy Zone

Another shooter, but it couldn't be more different from Irem's excellent *R-Type*. Whereas *R-Type* features sinister looking monstrosities and takes place in a bio-mechanical nightmare, *Fantasy Zone* is full of zany looking enemies that float around a Day-Glo world filled with all the pastel colours of the rainbow. *R-Type*'s mayors are horrific monstrosities that fill you with dread, *Fantasy Zone*'s are sickly cute and you just want to cuddle them until they explode. Don't be fooled though, for while it's sweeter than sweet to look at, it's tough as old boots to play. Another excellent shooter. ■



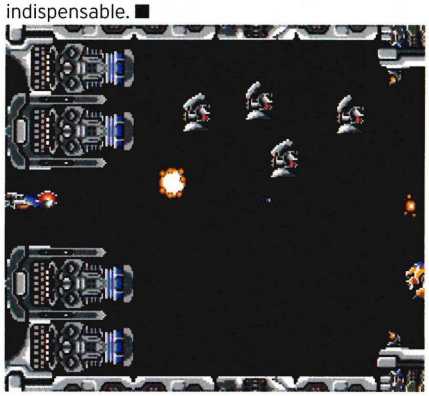
California Games

Epyx's summer sports compendium has appeared on a number of different systems over the years, but this Master System effort is easily the best version. All the sprites are amazingly well animated, there are six different events including surfing and BMX riding to take part in, and it's possible to play with up to seven other players. Very impressive. Throw in some catchy, summery tunes, plenty of bright visuals and challenging gameplay, and California games really shouldn't be missed under any circumstances. ■



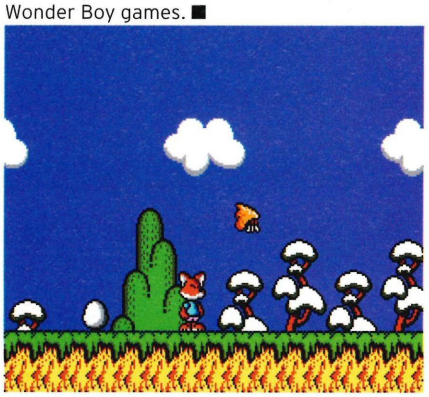
R-Type

Okay, so this can't hope to match the masterful PC Engine release, but there's no denying that the Master System version of Irem's *R-Type* is an incredible achievement. While many of the sprites suffer from a fair amount of flickering (especially the impressive bosses) the actual gameplay and level design is faultless. In fact, this particular *R-Type* could be deemed better than the arcade original, as it features a brand new (but difficult to access) bonus level. If you enjoy a good blaster you'll find *R-Type* to be indispensable. ■



Psycho Fox

Don't be fooled by the fantastically bright visuals and cutely designed characters; *Psycho Fox* is a really tough platformer that will push your skills to the limit, and then some. While it takes a fair old while to get used to the main character's built-in inertia, you'll soon become accustomed to the way he tears through the massive levels, and will start to discover that *Psycho Fox* is in fact a very satisfying platformer that is bound to go down well with fans of the Master System's Wonder Boy games. ■



2.80 CRACKED

Another new exploit found, as Sony's PSP gets cracked

You've got to hand it to the members of the PSP's steadily growing homebrew scene. No sooner does Sony release a new piece of firmware to counteract the latest hacker crack, then those pesky (at least in Sony's eyes) hackers are at it again.

Thanks to the diligent work of hackers such as NOPx86, skylark, joek2100, jimp, Fanjita and many others, it's now possible to use homebrew on all versions of firmware starting from 2.0 onwards.

What's more, unlike previous cracks, you don't actually need to own a version of *GTA: Liberty City Stories* (although let's face it, it's so popular, you're bound to already have it). Instead, all you need is a PSP with the ability to view tiff files (2.0+ and over).

First discovered by NOPx86, after a little experimentation, he was soon able to crash the PSP and alter many of the image viewers. After a lot of hard coding and plenty of help from the aforementioned hackers, the end result is 'Hello World', a brand new application, and best of all it is so simple use that you don't need a convoluted walkthrough to get it up and running.

Of course, it's still not as good as an actual 1.5 enabled PSP (which enables you to play any homebrew utility or emulator you fancy) but at least you can now enter the scene. Head on over to http://dl.qj.net/index.php?pg=12&fid=9656 and download now. ■

GBA ON PSP

Game Boy Advance emulator already near completion

Now this is bound to get Nintendo a little hot under the collar. Exophase has been hard at work on his Game Boy Advance emulator and it's already coming along in proverbial leaps and bounds.

Despite still being at Beta stage, the emulator itself is of a very impressive quality and is going down a storm with everyone that's tried it out on the PSP Updates forum. The last version of gpSP was very unreliable and prone to crashing, but this new version fixes this and much, much more. For starters, many of the games that we tried are now running at full speed, with near perfect sound, the resolution has been suitably improved and it's now possible to load up a new game while another is already running. It really is a staggering achievement, especially as many sceptics believed it would be impossible to get the emulator running at a playable speed.

It's going to be very interesting to see how Exophase's project continues, and equally intriguing to see what Nintendo does about this.

Only time will tell, however, whatever happens, **Go>Play** will be there every step of the way. ■

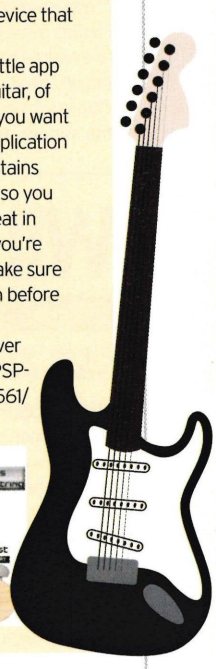
RIFF-TASTIC

Tune your guitar with a brand new PSP homebrew application

Not content with digging around and finding you a homebrew application that will send mosquitos crazy, or allow you to poke penguins, our latest investigation has turned up a device that will enable you to tune your guitar.

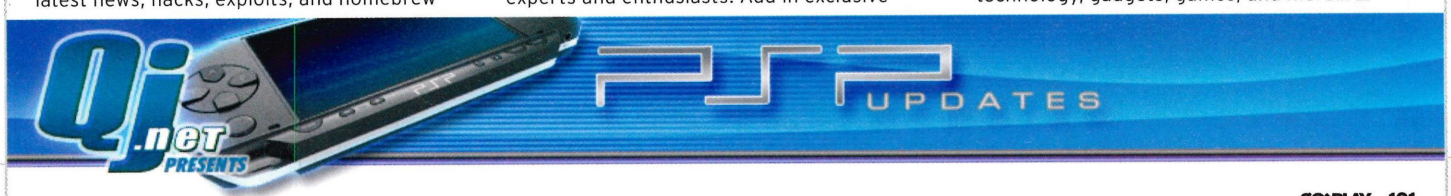
As its name suggests, this handy little app (or totally useless, if you don't play guitar, of course) allows you to play any string you want while you tune your guitar up. The application itself is very easy to navigate and contains plenty of easy to understand menus, so you should have your guitar sounding great in a matter of moments (very handy if you're preparing for a gig, or just want to make sure your instrument is in tip-top condition before you start practising).

If you're intrigued, then head on over to http://dl.qj.net/PSP-Guitar-Tuner-PSP-Homebrew-Applications/pg/12/fid/9561/catid/151 ■



PSP UPDATES

PSP Updates, the flagship blog of QJ.NET, has been the ultimate PSP resource for over a year. Nowhere else will you find a PSP website updated 24 hours a day, seven days a week with all the latest news, hacks, exploits, and homebrew releases as they happen. It's the one-stop shop for all your PSP needs. Get the latest info and screenshots on upcoming PSP games, download the latest homebrew releases at DL.QJ.NET, or get help from a forum full of experts and enthusiasts. Add in exclusive interviews, contests, and editorials and PSP Updates has everything you could want from a PSP site. And the good times don't stop there - branch out with QJ.NET to find the latest information on all the next-gen consoles, technology, gadgets, games, and more... ■



In keeping with our themed trilogy of reviews, this month we're taking a look at some of the best CPS1 games you're unlikely to ever play on a Capcom compilation

CADILLACS AND DINOSAURS

Cadillacs And Dinosaurs

Originally Released **1992** / Emulator Used **Capcom CPS1**

CAPCOM COULD DO no wrong when it came to scrolling fighters and after the success of *Final Fight* it was soon looking for lucrative licences to ensure that the money kept rolling in. One such venture was the superb adaptation of late Eighties comic strip *Xenozoic Tales* by Mark Schultz.

Featuring four heroes of varying abilities, some devilishly tough bosses and loads of dinosaurs (which you could actually beat up), Capcom's excellent brawler was most notable for the huge range of firearms that you were able to use. Oh, and a huge Cadillac that looked great, but was a bitch to control. Even today, it remains a thoroughly enjoyable fighter and could show the risible *Final Fight Streetwise* a thing or two. ■

WILLOW

Willow

Originally Released **1989** / Emulator Used **Capcom CPS1**

WITH COMPANIES NOT thinking that gamers would still want to be playing its games some 15-odd years after they were first released, it's perhaps understandable that many picked up licences to use just in the arcades. *Willow* is a perfect example of a fantastic Capcom title that is unlikely to ever see the light of day again. Which is a shame, as it really is something special.

Loosely based on George Lucas' so-so film, *Willow* is a side-scrolling platformer/run-'n-gun title that takes place over six sprawling levels. There are some frightfully impressive bosses to fight against and the gameplay is set up so you can play between two distinct characters: diminutive Willow Ufgood or the fierce fighter Madmartigan. An excellent little title that really shouldn't be missed. ■

While not as violent as the recent *Punisher* videogame, this beat-'em-up still managed to capture the style of the comic book

THE PUNISHER

The Punisher

Originally Released **1993** / Emulator Used **Capcom CPS1**

If you thought *Cadillacs And Dinosaurs* was brutal, wait until you check this little beauty out. *The Punisher* is quite possibly one of the most violent scrolling fighters that we've ever played and we bloody love it.

Taking on the role of the titular Punisher – or Nick Fury if you fancy a spot of two-player action – the idea is to fight your way through a series of increasingly challenging levels before coming face to face with crime boss Kingpin.

Capcom's CPS 1 board perfectly captures the style of the original comic strips and the end result is an absolutely stunning affair that looks all the better for being on the PSP's pin-sharp screen. The bright cartoony sprites are absolutely massive (wait until you see the size of final boss, Kingpin) and look as if they have just leapt off the pages of a comic strip. The action itself is punctuated by large comic book-styled blams and kapows, while the superb music score perfectly captures the insane carnage that is taking place on-screen.

Like *Cadillacs And Dinosaurs*, *The Punisher* features plenty of great weapons to use – everything from machine guns to huge axes – a devastating range of combat moves to play around with (of which the mid-air throw is easily the coolest) and gallons of gallons of blood.

It may be yet another scrolling fighter, but it's so perfectly executed that you can't but have a huge grin on your face while you're playing. If this appears on a future Capcom compilation we'll eat our berettas. ■

Not only is *The Punisher* a beat-'em-up, it's a shoot-'em-up too! Well, it had to be really didn't it?

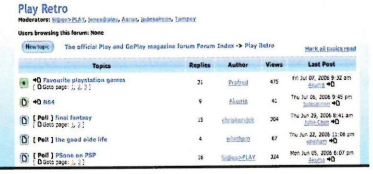
JOIN THE DEBATE...

www.play-mag.co.uk/forum

THE PSP FUN doesn't end when you've read the latest issue of Go>Play from cover to cover. Get yourself on the net and come on over to our forum. You can chat directly to the people who put your favourite magazine together and discuss the highs and lows of PSP gaming with loads of other readers.

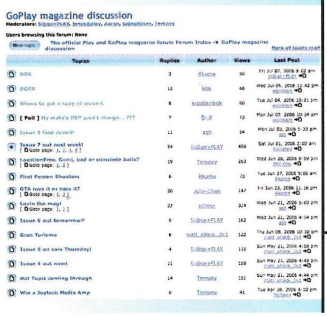
Play Retro

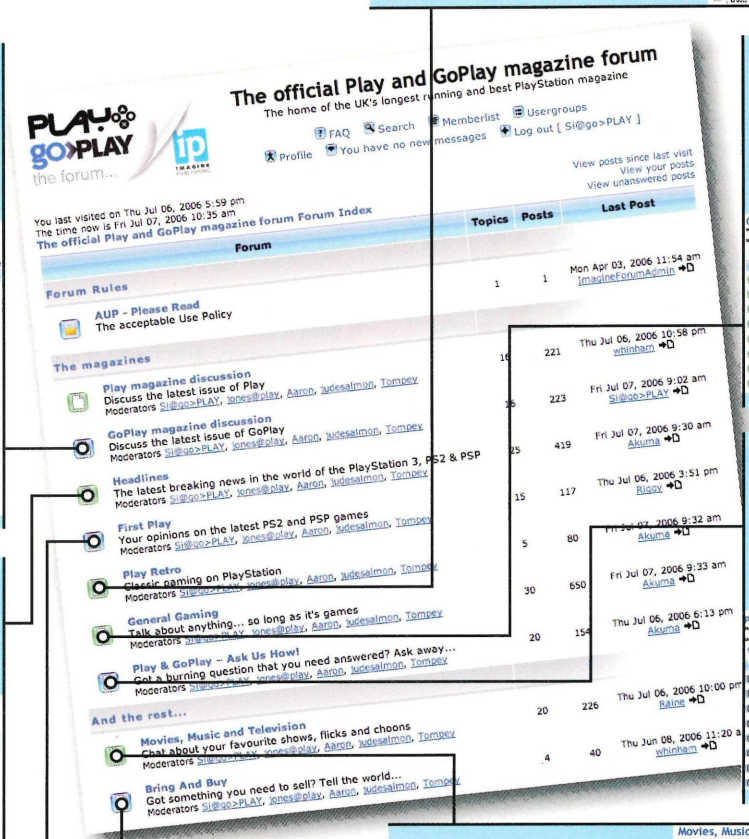
If you love old games as much as we do you'll want to talk about them in here. From *Space Invaders* and *Dizzy* to *Oddworld* and *Duke Nukem*, if it's old it's welcome.



Magazine Discussion

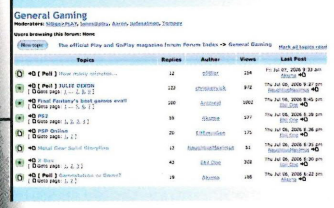
Chat about the mag with us and other readers. Tell us what you like or don't like or simply shower us with compliments, we like that.





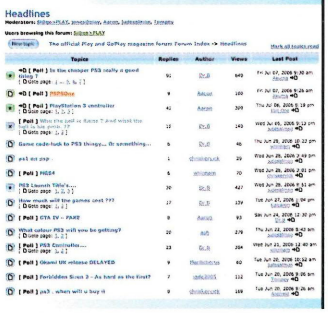
General Gaming

Any game, any format, any genre. It doesn't matter what you discuss in here as long as it's games from the latest *GTA* to the price of the PS3.



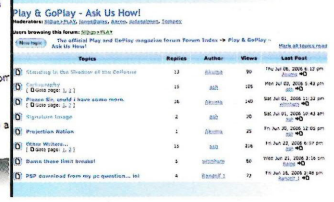
Headlines

Find out all the latest news in the world of PlayStation and chat about it to your heart's content.



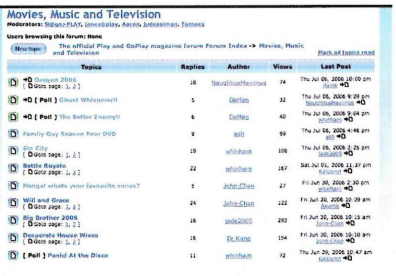
Ask Us How!

Got a particular query about the forum, the mag or a game? Post it in here and we'll do our best to give you an answer or at least point you in the right direction.



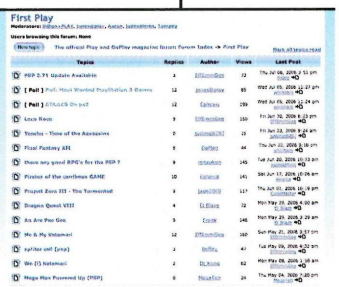
Movies, Music and Television

Talk about the latest release at the cinema, last week's episode of *Lost* or the last album you bought, the choice is yours.



First Play

Got an opinion on a game? Then share it with the world here. This is the place to tell everyone what games float your boat or sink it without a trace.



Bring and Buy

Got something to sell but don't want to pay those online auction fees? See if you can find a buyer for your stuff right here.

...so what are you waiting for? Come and have your say!

EXPAND

MORE PERIPHERALS PUT TO THE TEST

MORE ITEMS FROM THE WORLD OF PSP ACCESSORIES FOR YOU TO PERUSE. READ ON TO FIND OUT IF THEY ARE WORTH YOUR CASH...

Thrustmaster Wi-Fi USB Key For PSP £29.99

GETTING ON THE net with anything other than a computer that's plugged directly into the phone line can sometimes be a tricky prospect. If you don't have the relevant know-how then trying to get something to work wirelessly can be an absolute nightmare, especially where routers are concerned. Thankfully, Thrustmaster has made the process a great deal easier and cheaper with its Wi-Fi dongle that will send out a wireless signal from any Internet-enabled computer once you have plugged it into a USB port and completed the simple set-up process.

Of course, the set up isn't fool proof, and when dealing with the Internet nothing is ever straightforward. However, with a little tinkering you should be surfing the net via your PSP in no time. Not only that but you'll be able to play infrastructure-enabled games too. We did find that the signal strength was sometimes a little weak but as long as you don't stray too far from the dongle, you're surfing should be relatively smooth and uninterrupted.

SCORE: ★★★★

ThinkOutside Boomtube H201 £89.99

THE NUMBER OF PSP media amps on the market is getting silly now, and when they all do the same thing, it's difficult to pick which one is best for you. This speaker set up is slightly different however and definitely stands out from the crowd. Rather than giving you a PSP stand covered in silly lights and weird buttons, the Boomtube simply sticks to giving you the best sound possible. With a meaty subwoofer and two satellite speakers, the sound reproduction produced by this odd-looking contraption is exceptional. With a rechargeable battery inside, it will give you five hours use from a single charge – perfect for that barbecue or trip to the beach. Pumping out 40W total power, it's guaranteed to annoy the neighbours if you turn it up, and this baby goes all the way to 11 (no, really).

Quality like this comes at a price and at £170 we're not sure if the Boomtube is really a sound investment, if you'll pardon the pun. There's no denying it's better than every other media amp out there but really it should be. Obviously, if you're really into your music and you're out and about all the time then this will probably be an ideal item. The rest of you, however, should maybe look for something a little cheaper. As it is though, the Boomtube is a quality piece of kit regardless of price. **SCORE:** ★★★★

It may look weird but the Boomtube makes sweet, sweet music

CATS IN THE CRADLE

Talismoon release PSP car cradle

Ever wanted to be able to see your PSP screen while driving along? No, us neither. But should that one day change, Talismoon has created the InTouch PSP car cradle, which attaches to the inside of your windscreen and puts your PSP in full view. The only real use we can think of at the moment is if your passenger wants to watch a movie or perhaps you want to have one of Sony's *Passport To...* titles running while you drive. Of course, once the GPS receiver is released then the cradle will be incredibly useful and will make your PSP just like one of those sat nav things, if the device has that function of course. Just make sure you remember to take it with you when you leave the car so some dirty chav doesn't steal it. The InTouch PSP car cradle is available now for £12.95. ■

We're guessing playing a game while driving is against some sort of law

MOVIE WATCH

THERE'S PLENTY OF VIDEO CONTENT FLOATING AROUND THE INTERNET THAT CAN BE DOWNLOADED ONTO YOUR PSP. WE TAKE A LOOK AT SOME OF THE BEST SITES TO VISIT

www.dailypspmovie.com

The name of this site is rather misleading, as it rarely seems to get updated. However, as well as some movie trailers you'll find some funny little videos including one of a man in a banana suit setting himself on fire and another of a BMX trick gone wrong. Unfortunately this is another site that doesn't provide you with thumbnails and despite their claim that the movies are formatted for the PSP, we had mixed results when trying to get them working. Top tip – change the file name of their videos to M4V and a random selection of numbers so that the PSP will recognise it (for example we downloaded the clip called bananonfire.mp4 and simply changed the name to M4V12345.mp4 and it worked like a treat).

www.uip.co.uk/news/psp_trailers.asp

United International Pictures has come out in strong support of the PSP and regularly updates its site with trailers for its latest movies. It even provides thumbnails – hooray!

http://psp.connect.com

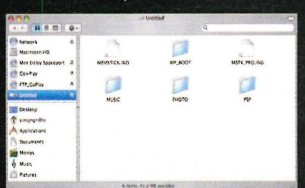
This site has the greatest wealth of different stuff, from movie trailers and game trailers to celebrity news and cartoons. As it's a Sony site you shouldn't have a problem downloading anything and conversion shouldn't be an issue.

www.movie-list.com/psp

Not updated particularly often and it doesn't like Apple Macs, but there are a few trailers that you won't find on many other sites, all resized to fit the PSP. One drawback is that they don't have thumbnails so the files will be unnamed when you look for them on the PSP.

SETTING UP YOUR MEMORY STICK

IN ORDER TO get movie clips on your PSP you'll need a memory stick and USB cable. However, you'll need to tinker with the memory card slightly before putting movie files on it. If there isn't a folder called MP_ROOT created already then do that first. Now inside that folder create another two, one called 101MNV01 and another 101ANV01. That's it basically. Now all you need to do is drop the files into one of those two folders depending on the formatting of the file (files starting M4V into 101MNV01 and files starting MAQ into 101ANO1). Remember you'll need the thumbnail image in the same folder too; otherwise you won't be able to see the file on your PSP screen. ■



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Enjoy some retro action on a shiny new PSP thanks to Xplosiv

RETRO GAMING IS booming on PSP, and the latest developer to get in on the action is Taito, producer of numerous classic arcade games. In shops from 6 October for the bargain price of £19.99, *Taito Legends Power-Up* contains 25 games in total with four of those being newly enhanced updates of classic titles. Retro fans should be familiar with a number of the games included on the UMD ranging from the incredibly cute platformer *The New Zealand Story* to the side-scrolling hack-and-slash *Rastan*. Also included in the line up are *Cameltry*, *Crazy Balloon*, *Elevator Action* and the legendary *Space Invaders*.

Thanks to those lovely folks at Xplosiv, we have a PlayStation Portable and a copy of the game for one lucky winner, as well as nine copies of *Taito Legends Power-Up* for the runners-up.

To be in with a chance of winning these great prizes simply send us the answer to the following question:

What is the name of the man who created Space Invaders all those years ago? (Hint: we interviewed him last issue.)

1ST PRIZE
Sony PSP and a copy of Taito Legends Power-Up
NINE RUNNERS-UP
Copy of Taito Legends Power-Up

Send your answer on a postcard to the address below, or via email to **goplay@imagine-publishing.co.uk**, putting Taito as the subject. Get your entries in no later than 18 October and be sure to include your name and address with your entry so that we can send out your prize!

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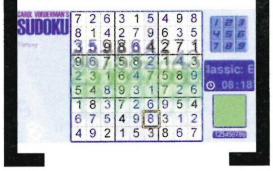
DIRECTORY

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE NOT-SO-UGLY LIST OF PSP GAMING

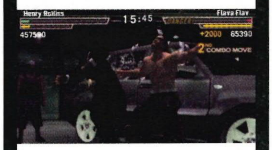
Carol Vorderman's Sudoku

Whether you like this or not depends on your opinion of Sudoku. Even then it's cheaper to buy a paper if you're desperate for a game. You don't get help from Carol in the paper though.



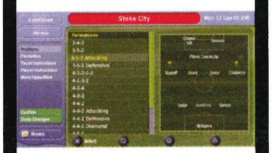
Def Jam Fight For NY: The Takedown

So people reckon that this is better than *Tekken: Dark Resurrection*. Those people are fools as, while this is a decent conversion of the PS2 brawler, it does get repetitive after a while.

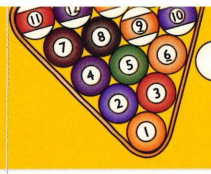


Football Manager Handheld

The best football management game on PSP by a whole eight per cent, but you might want to save your cash for the update due towards the end of the year. Look for a preview of *Football Manager 2007* next issue.



TITLE	PUBLISHER	ISSUE	SCORE	GENRE	THOUGHT FOR THE DAY
Ape Academy	SCEE	1	85%		Simian silliness of the highest order and tremendously enjoyable to boot.
Ape Escape: On The Loose	SCEE	1	62%		Do we really need this old PSone game on our shiny new PSP?
Ape Escape P	SCEE	5	74%		A port of the old PSone version with virtually no improvements at all.
Archer Maclean's Mercury	Atari	1	82%		A tough challenge but there's no way you'll be able to tear yourself away.
Armored Core: Formula Front - Extreme Battle	505 Gamestreet	5	56%		Great for hardcore mech fans; impenetrable to everyone else.
Astonishia Story	Ubisoft	7	61%		Pretty outdated as far as RPGs go, this will struggle to hold your interest until the end.
ATV Offroad Fury: Blazin' Trails	SCEE	2	70%		Fun for a while, but only if you don't mind a rather limited experience.
Burnout Legends	Electronic Arts	1	71%		The lack of draw distance ruins the fun, but *Legends* is still worth a play.
Breath Of Fire III	Capcom	4	76%		A decent effort but starting to show its age now.
Bust-A-Move Ghost	505 Gamestreet	5	85%		Hugely playable and addictive, though the 'spooky' treatment does nothing for the game.
Capcom Classics Collection: Remixed (Import)	Capcom	6	81%	N/A	Well, here's a mixed bag of retro gaming where the good outweighs the bad.
Carol Vorderman's Sudoku	Xplosiv	6	69%		Better than *Go! Sudoku*, but it's still just a Sudoku game.
Cars	THQ	8	71%		Not a particularly demanding title, but it's certainly not a terrible game.
Championship Manager	Eidos	2	80%		Addictive but there's plenty of room for improvement.
Championship Manager 2006	Sega	5	81%		A little shy of *Football Manager*'s greatness but not far off.
Coded Arms	Konami	1	64%		Okay attempt at an FPS but not quite okay enough.
Colin McRae Rally 2005 Plus	Codemasters	1	83%		Just like the PS2 version but a bit smaller in size.
Crash Tag Team Racing	Vivendi	2	77%		*Bandicoot* fans should find this funny, innovative and perfect for the PSP.
Darkstalkers Chronicle: The Chaos Tower	Capcom	1	79%		A good game and a good port, but the controls are far from perfect.
Daxter	SCEE	4	89%		Not overly original but manages to be an addictive platformer all the same.
Dead To Rights: Reckoning	Electronic Arts	3	63%		Reasonable blasting action that quickly gets repetitive.
Def Jam Fight For NY: The Takedown	Electronic Arts	8	81%		Smashing the crap out of rappers is fun if repetitive.
Dragon Ball Z: Shin Budokai	Atari	5	69%		Too much button mashing mars what could have been a decent beat-'em-up.
Dynasty Warriors	Koei	1	70%		Fun at first but even fans will be a little bit disappointed.
Everybody's Golf	SCEE	1	91%		Fun, addictive and perfect golfing in almost every way.
Exit	Ubisoft	3	83%		Enjoyable puzzle action that can get a bit frustrating.
F1 Grand Prix	SCEE	1	81%		Spot-on adaptation of the sport, worthy of a decent place on the grid.
Field Commander	Ubisoft	8	81%		Quality strategy game that offers engrossing gameplay on and offline.
FIFA 06	Electronic Arts	1	76%		Possibly the best footy game on PSP (after *Pro Evo 5*).
FIFA Street 2	Electronic Arts	4	76%		PSP is clearly the best place for *FIFA Street* - it's actually quite good.
2006 FIFA World Cup Germany	Electronic Arts	6	72%		A solid footy experience but it lacks the flair to make it great.
Fight Night Round 3	Electronic Arts	3	93%		You need this absolutely fantastic boxing simulation in your collection.
Fired Up	SCEE	1	59%		Just about playable, but not worth anything more than a passing look.
Football Manager Handheld	Sega	4	88%		A cut-down version of the game that is still just as compelling as ever.
Formula One 06	SCEE	8	77%		A decent Formula One sim that has some impressive online capabilities.
From Russia With Love	Electronic Arts	4	62%		A poor PS2 game that's even worse on PSP. Goodbye, Mr Bond.
Gangs Of London	SCEE	9	80%		Loads of stuff to see and do but dodgy controls hold it back from greatness.



TITLE	PUBLISHER	ISSUE	SCORE	GENRE	THOUGHT FOR THE DAY
Generation Of Chaos (Import)	Nippon Ichi	7	73%		A strange mix of RTS and RPG that sort of works. Good but not great.
Gitaroo Man Lives!	Koei	9	89%		This port of the PS2 version is almost perfect. The best rhythm game on PSP!
Go! Sudoku	SCEE	2	40%		An expensive way to play a game that really only needs a pen and paper.
Gottlieb Pinball Classics	System 3	4	86%		Well-crafted and the provider of hours of enjoyment.
Gradius Collection (Import)	Konami	8	76%		A solid collection that's sadly missing the fifth game in the series.
Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories	Rockstar	1	97%		Quite simply the best there is. If you only buy one game, make it this one.
GripShift	Ubisoft	1	69%		An interesting kart-based game with not enough racing.
Guilty Gear XX #Reload (Import)	Sega	7	89%		Plays far better than *Street Fighter* and *Darkstalkers* - the 2D beat-'em-up of choice.
Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire	Electronic Arts	1	70%		It's good for the fans, but sadly not many others.
Infected (Import)	THQ	4	77%		A gory horror-fest that gets slightly repetitive. Great multi-player, though.
Juiced: Eliminator	THQ	7	77%		Not the best looking 'pimper' but definitely more fun to play than its rivals.
Kao Challengers	Atari	2	55%		Surprisingly good multi-player, but everything else about this is so, so bad.
Key Of Heaven	SCEE	4	80%		Looks lovely and plays well too, unfortunately it's just too damn repetitive though.
Koloomn	505 Gamestreet	5	70%		Best played with a friend as the single-player isn't particularly engaging.
Lemmings	SCEE	2	82%		The suicidal critters are back and they're just as good as you remember.
LocoRoco	SCEE	7	95%		If this isn't in your collection you don't really deserve to own a PSP.
The Lord Of The Rings: Tactics	Electronic Arts	1	74%		Decent effort from EA, but it falls short of its potential.
Lumines	Ubisoft	1	88%		Delightful to watch and addictive to boot - this really is puzzle heaven.
Madden NFL 06	Electronic Arts	2	76%		Too much is missing from the PS2 version for this to get top marks.
Marvel Nemesis: Rise Of The Imperfects	Electronic Arts	1	73%		A reasonable beat-'em-up, but flawed and nowhere near as good as it sounds.
Me And My Katamari (Import)	Electronic Arts	3	91%		Quirky, crazy and bizarre, but you'll love it.
MediEvil: Resurrection	SCEE	1	67%		Big on personality if not on gameplay. A disappointing return for Sir Dan.
MegaMan Maverick Hunter X	Capcom	4	82%		Rock hard, but great fun once you get to grips with it.
MegaMan Powered Up	Capcom	3	79%		This valiant effort isn't the best *MegaMan* game on PSP.
Metal Gear Ac!d	Konami	1	82%		Tough to learn, but an original slice of action for fans.
Metal Gear Ac!d 2 (Import)	Konami	5	91%		Fixes all the flaws of the first game - essential!
Miami Vice: The Game	Vivendi Universal	8	76%		While not a classic, this decent shoot-'em-up still contains some nice touches.
Micro Machines V4	Codemasters	7	80%		A rather tricky difficulty level slightly mars an otherwise fun game.
Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition	Rockstar	1	70%		If 'pimping rides' is your thing then look no further.
Midway Arcade Treasures: Extended Play	Midway	4	77%	N/A	A strong compilation with some real classics on board.
Monster Hunter Freedom	Capcom	5	79%		There's some frustration and boredom at first, then it becomes an ultimately great adventure.
MX vs. ATV Unleashed: On The Edge	THQ	5	65%		A so-so racer that is fun for a while but ultimately an unfulfilling game.
NBA Ballers: Rebound	Midway	5	88%		Nice to look at and fun to play, a great b-ball game.
NBA Street: Showdown	Electronic Arts	1	87%		Great conversion of a solid game - truly excellent in multi-player.
Need For Speed Most Wanted	Electronic Arts	1	68%		Not particularly good, but adequate all the same.
Need For Speed Underground Rivals	Electronic Arts	1	61%		'Pimped' to the post by the superior *Midnight Club*.
NFL Street 2: Unleashed	Electronic Arts	1	76%		Fun but still plagued by the flaws of the PS2 version.
OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast	Sega	3	93%		Looks amazing, plays even better. Yet another great PSP racing title.
Pac-Man World 3	Electronic Arts	7	40%		As generic as they come despite a few stolen moments of fun.
Pirates Of The Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	Buena Vista Games	8	59%		Has its moments but ultimately just isn't that fun.

Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire

While there is some fun to be had with Harry and chums, this is little more than a cash-in, albeit a half decent one. Let's hope the next one offers up some more imaginative gameplay.

MegaMan Maverick Hunter X

Of the two *MegaMan* games on PSP, this one is slightly better than the other. However, it really is incredibly difficult at times and you'll need the patience of a saint to get through it.

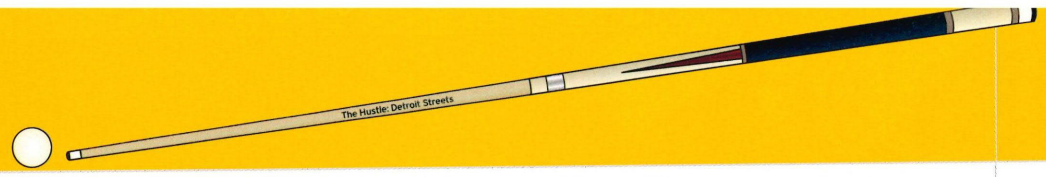
Need For Speed Underground Rivals

Not a bad effort but not a particularly great one either. One of those launch games that offers little over the PS2 version and as such isn't really worth owning. It does look quite nice though.

Quick, turn the page for more great games!

KEY

Racing
Beat-'em-up
Sport
Action/Adventure
Platform
Shoot-'em-up
Puzzle
RPG/Strategy



TOP FIVE HIGH SCORES

1

GTA: Liberty City Stories

With a massive 97% this awesome videogame easily gets the top spot and deservedly so, because it's bloody well awesome!

2

LocoRoco

Some people don't rate this and it hasn't exactly sold like hot cakes, but that doesn't change the fact that it's cute, fun and wonderfully inventive. 95% well deserved.

3

Tekken: Dark Resurrection

The best beat-'em-up on PSP and 95% says so! There really is no greater pleasure than pounding the crap out of all-commers on the bus.

4

OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast

Fanboy Martin gave this a rather respectable 93%, which some think is a little high. There's no denying it's a great arcade racer though.

5

Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror

With the same 93% score as *OutRun*, *Syphon Filter* gets jipped by the alphabet. Bloody English language.

TITLE	PUBLISHER	ISSUE	SCORE	GENRE	THOUGHT FOR THE DAY
PoPoLoCrois	Agetec	3	69%		Far too simplistic to satisfy the majority of RPG fans.
PQ: Practical Intelligence Quotient	D3Publisher	4	75%		An original piece of brain-bending puzzle action that can get frustrating.
Pro Evolution Soccer 5	Konami	2	79%		The best footy game on PSP, but a few flaws hold it back from classic status.
Pursuit Force	SCEE	1	89%		High-speed hi-jinks that really show off PSP.
Puyo Pop Fever	Sega	6	68%		Not the best puzzler on PSP, but still a decent effort.
Ridge Racer	SCEE	1	92%		*Ridge* is back on form with a truly fantastic PSP debut.
Samurai Warriors: State Of War	Koei	4	75%		Provides a decent slice of hack 'n' slash fun, but it's nothing particularly special.
The Sims 2	Electronic Arts	2	86%		*The Sims* is always great and that doesn't change on the PSP.
SOCOM US Navy SEALs: Fireteam Bravo	SCEE	4	91%		A few control problems don't mar this excellent tactical shoot-'em-up.
Spider-Man 2	Activision	1	47%		Spidey's latest outing sadly pales in comparison to the PS2 version.
Splinter Cell: Essentials	Ubisoft	3	80%		Not a bad first outing for Sam Fisher, but we were expecting more.
SpongeBob SquarePants: The Yellow Avenger	THQ	6	52%		Buy the movie on UMD instead; it's cheaper and a lot more fun.
SSX On Tour	Electronic Arts	4	87%		Great single-player, great multi-player, and looks to die for.
Star Wars Battlefront II	LucasArts	2	80%		Controls take getting used to but still an absolute blast.
Street Fighter Alpha 3 MAX	Capcom	3	80%		Arcade-perfect port let down by the awkward controls.
Street Riders	Ubisoft	5	56%		*187 Ride Or Die* with a different name but, in reality, still just as rubbish.
Super Monkey Ball Adventure	Sega	7	78%		It's *Monkey Ball*, which is great, but it's too hard, which is bad.
Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror	SCEE	6	93%		A fantastic game on nearly every level, miss this at your peril.
Tales Of Eternia	Ubisoft	3	84%		Despite offering little that's new, it still manages to be highly addictive.
Talkman	SCEE	6	72%		A great idea but there aren't enough phrases to make it an indispensable buy.
Tekken: Dark Resurrection	SCEE	9	94%		Do you even need to ask? This is the greatest handheld beat-'em-up ever!
Tenchu: Time Of The Assassins	Sega	8	60%		Camera problems and a terrible draw distance mean this hasn't got much going for it.
TOCA Race Driver 2	Codemasters	1	81%		Carbon copy from PS2, but it does manage to impress.
Tokobot	TakeTwo	3	72%		A nice idea that doesn't really work as well as it should.
Tomb Raider: Legend	Eidos	6	78%		Some control issues let Lara down, but this is still a solid adventure.
Tony Hawk's Underground 2 Remix	Activision	1	70%		More of the usual boarding antics let down by some rather dodgy controls.
Twisted Metal: Head On	SCEE	2	70%		Fun in multi-player but this game is plagued by annoying control issues.
Ultimate Ghosts 'N Goblins	Capcom	9	91%		Takes the retro template and builds an awesome game around it - essential!
Untold Legends: Brotherhood Of The Blade	SCEE	1	73%		A button-bashing RPG that unfortunately doesn't quite make the grade.
Untold Legends: The Warrior's Code (Import)	Ubisoft	6	78%		Offers nothing particularly original but fans will enjoy it.
Valkyrie Profile: Lenneth (Import)	Square Enix	9	89%		One of the better RPGs on PSP even if it is more suited to console gaming.
Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble	Capcom	5	85%		A little mad on the eyes but still a great deal of fun.
Virtua Tennis World Tour	Sega	1	90%		One of the most addictive games on the PSP to date, an essential buy.
WipEout Pure	SCEE	1	88%		Fast, beautiful and intense futuristic racing game.
World Poker Tour	2K Sports	5	81%		Great poker for both poker veterans and newcomers.
World Snooker Challenge 2005	Sega	1	89%		Filled with content, and plays surprisingly well.
World Tour Soccer 2	SCEE	7	74%		A worthy effort to take the genre in a new direction. Arcadey but fun.
World Tour Soccer: Challenge Edition	SCEE	1	71%		No trailblazer, but worthy of Premier League status.
Worms: Open Warfare	THQ	5	84%		*Worms*, back to its 2D best with a solid single-player experience and a fantastic multi-player.
WRC	SCEE	1	65%		Solid but lacklustre racing coming a firm second place to Colin.
WWE Smackdown Vs RAW 2006	THQ	2	90%		A perfectly formed miniature version of the PlayStation 2 grappler.
X-Men Legends II: Rise Of Apocalypse	Activision	2	69%		Fun for fans of the super-mutants but far from perfect.

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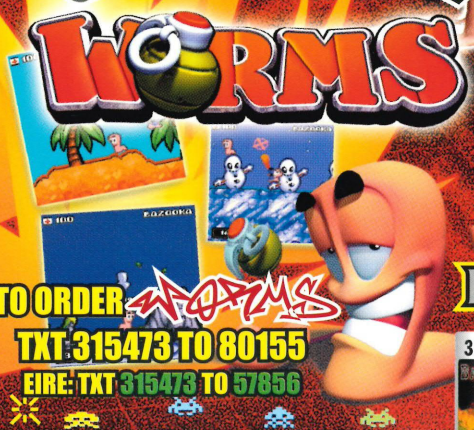

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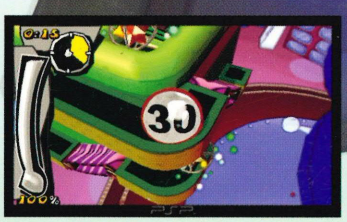

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